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GROSVENOR

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W. B. ROBERT



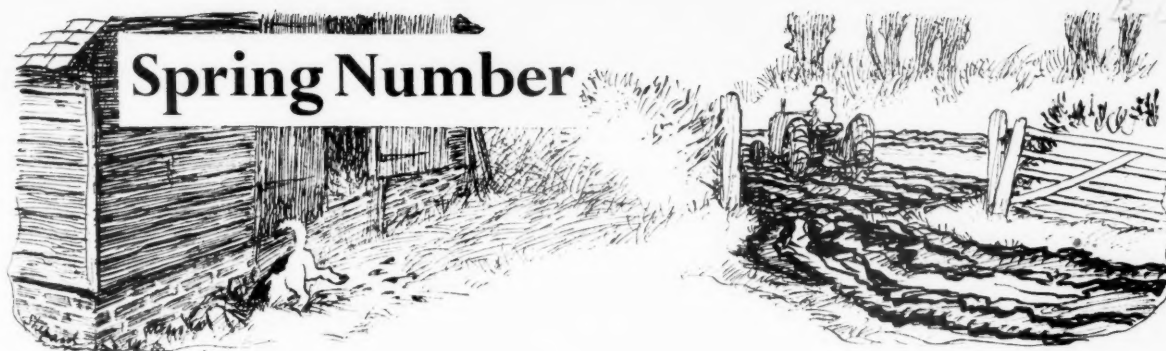
April

Many a man who lays no particular claim to athletic ability is nevertheless following the classic tradition. An athlete, in ancient Greece, was one who contended for a prize at the games; and the seat into which you collapse after your morning sprint for the 8.32 is undoubtedly a prize, though the daily struggle for it may not be your idea of a game. You could, of course, avoid this undignified procedure—if only you could remember to leave the house five minutes earlier. We, of course, have frequently claimed that the Midland Bank will 'do your remembering for you'. But the reference (to our Standing Order service) is concerned only with the payment of regularly-recurring accounts. It can, alas, do nothing to bring you into a better conjunction with the 8.32.

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PUNCH

Vol. CCXXXIV No. 6137 APRIL 2 1958

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MR. HENRY BROOKE, with the usual speech, has opened his fifth demonstration showing how old buildings can be turned to useful purpose. The public eagerly awaits news of which nationalized industry headquarters will move into the refurbished Stonehenge.

CHARIVARIA

Blunt Instrument Department

"THE ROAD OF CONTENT
A peace that passes understanding can be yours for an evening spent in the woods . . ."
Woman's Day

Most husbands feel unsympathetic to Lord Milford-Haven, who "doesn't know whether he's married or not." If he is, he'll know it all right.

A NEWSPAPER diarist, reporting that the Marquis of Exeter's home, Burleigh House, will be open to the public "on a wider scale," delighting visitors with ceiling paintings of the female form,



says that the house has "more sex on display than most of the stately homes." Other noble showmen think this may give quite a different meaning to talk of going bust.

TWO BANDITS who held up a Walworth estate agent's with a starting pistol qualified for the most unremarkable news story of the year by firing it and running.

AMERICAN cinemas showing *Around the World in Eighty Days* closed for

435

Mr. Mike Todd's funeral, but the manager of London's Astoria, where the film is also running, kept open. According to a report he gave two excellent reasons for his decision: "That is what Mike Todd would have wished. Besides, we have already booked seats for all performances."

PRAISE is due to the Admiralty for a really forceful W.R.N.S. recruiting drive, which includes such inducements as "twenty-four interesting jobs to choose from, many chances of going



overseas, the smartest uniform in the Services" and a statement from the Director, W.R.N.S., that of three thousand girls now serving a thousand will have become "marriage casualties" by next year.

"It seems a pity that Robert Muller should go out of his way to 'knock' Wilfred Pickles, the man who has brought happiness and cheer to thousands of lonely souls . . . What has Mr. Muller done for his fellow men?"

Reader's letter, Daily Mail

Knocked Wilfred Pickles.

THE POPE's description of 1958 as the springtime of history went down particularly well with Britons, who had just seen the sort of spring they were getting.

Khrushchev

Do you suppose I care for power? No—I only seek an unobscured locality From which to show the world how well we go
Since I destroyed the Cult of Personality.



Punch Diary

SAINST CHRISTOPHER, who died in the year 250 after excruciating torture, is the patron saint of ferrymen. The story is told that one day a strange child asked to be carried across a stream, for there was no bridge. Saint Christopher, although a big man, found this no easy task. Half-way across he staggered and complained about the child's extraordinary weight. "Marvel not," the boy replied, "for with me hast thou borne the sins of the whole world."

Time rolled by and, what with one thing and another, it was decided in 1958 that the Saint Christopher medal should be attached to a thing called a Vanguard rocket. The Vanguard was quite a weight, too. Was it not asking rather a lot of the saint that he should have to go through the whole thing all over again?

April Fools?

I ONCE knew a man with a friend who was a bore about his big new house; early on the morning of April 1 the man drove a For Sale board into his friend's garden, and all day long the phone rang, with offers of £200 or thereabouts. "I tell you it's not in the market!" "But you've got a board up." "I certainly have not." "Go and look" . . . The house-proud man went to the office, where the stream of calls continued.

What has become of the practical joke? It is true that a gramophone record exists, in which a joker with a concealed microphone behaves preposterously with complete strangers, and records their rage and confusion. But this is for money, not fun.

Yesterday was April 1. How many

of us were caught out with anything more serious than a squeal about flies in the marmalade, from younger members of the family? Perhaps life to-day is too serious for an old-fashioned leg-pull. Or do we feel, subconsciously, that in April, 1958, the universal leg is being pulled by life itself, and we can't hope to beat it at its own game?

Where's Holland?

RICHARD DIMBLEBY, in a recent *Panorama* programme, asked two Dutch schoolchildren whom they would most like to meet if they visited England. The girl answered "Prince Philip" almost before the question was out. The boy, after hesitating for a few moments, plumped for Diana Dors, and appeared to blush. These were very satisfactory choices, it seemed to me. But I saw another significance in the incident: how many English schoolchildren if asked whom they would most like to meet in Holland could rustle up a single name?

Dull Interlude

THERE is talk of a preposterous new play that flouts theatrical convention too outrageously, I imagine, ever to reach the stage. The list of characters contains not a single homosexual, lesbian, prostitute, drug addict, procurer, sex maniac, juvenile delinquent, lunatic, anarchist, or dust-bin dweller. There are no tenements and barely a

blasphemy. Everybody has to pretend to be in fairly good health. In a preface the author seeks to bolster up this niminy-piminy farrago with quotations from an earlier, dated, dramatist about players being the abstract and brief chronicle of the time and the purpose of playing being to hold the mirror up to nature, going on to argue that most of the people he knows seem to be more or less normal. This ivory tower gimmick is sheer escapism; there is no room to-day for a Pinero fiddling while Rome burns.

Sweets of Office

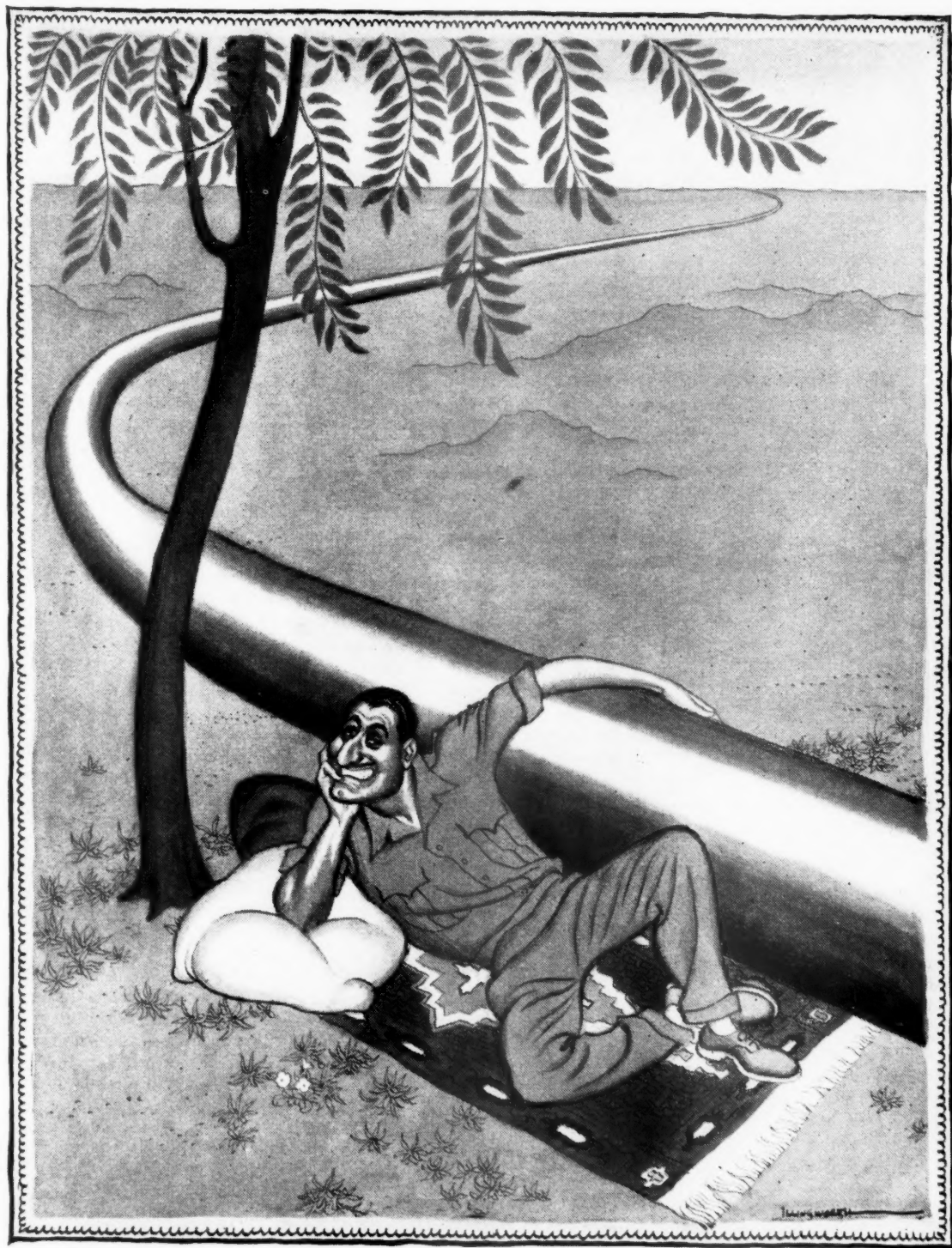
AT first sight the concern shown by the Inland Revenue in Nottingham over the use of luncheon vouchers for barter seems grotesque. One wants to say, let them chase the wealthy tax-dodger, let them save the man who honestly pays his taxes from having to play the compulsory host to businessmen in plushy West-End restaurants, instead of ferreting in typists' handbags to make sure they are on a fiscally approved diet. But the cost of the vouchers is a tax-expense and that means that I am helping to take the typists out to lunch and if I am paying I want the girls to have a good hot meal. Apparently the adolescent office-worker prefers to swap her vouchers for slabs of fruit cake or large apple-pies that she takes home. I can feel benevolent about young girls who have long journeys to work and I quite like to think that some of the money I earn and pay over helps to plump them up a bit. But I'm damned if I'll work to provide fruit cake for their fathers.

Oh What a Tangled Web . . .

THE *Daily Telegraph* reports that there are now only fifty Nene geese on the slopes of the Hawaiian islands: the species has stayed away from water so long that its feet are only half-webbed. While vaguely aware of evolution as a factor in the past, I can never get used to the idea that it is operating in the present. There is something quite horrible about these half-webs. Are there other birds, once roosters but now aquatic, that are developing webs in their turn? When these are half-webbed too, the bird population in Hawaii will be gruesomely transitional in form. The people with the headache will be editors of bird recognition manuals.



"This one really will shake the Americans: it's offering them financial aid."



... and Thou
Beside me gurgling in the Wilderness

EAST IS WEST . . .

The debate continues on the cold war and the menace of nuclear weapons

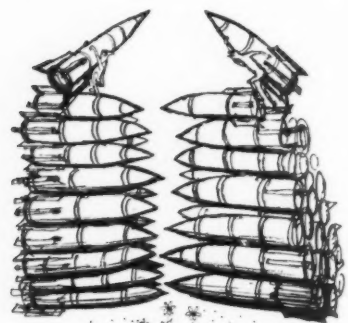
THE PATTERN OF THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

By VISCOUNT CHANDOS

THE torrent of controversy about H-bombs and deterrents is in full spate. Can we get across the torrent without getting our feet too wet, by throwing in a stepping-stone or two?

Here seem to be some of the stepping-stones.

First, to limit in advance the use of a deterrent is to destroy the deterrent by the amount of the limitation. In



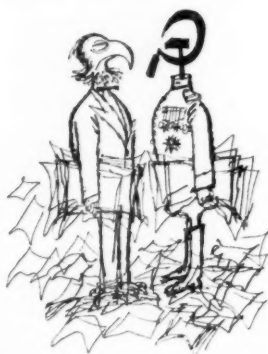
the event it may be common sense not to use the deterrent, but to decide that you won't in advance is folly. Thus, if Great Britain were to say that she would never use the H-bomb except against another H-bomb, the deterrent is against the H-bomb but has become a positive incentive towards the waging of conventional war, in which we are relatively weak. The cumulative incentive to conventional war would be at its greatest if we alone were to renounce the H-bomb because it is inhuman, and cut down our conventional forces below the minimum because they are expensive. Deterrents are to prevent action, and it is idle to discuss deterrents on the assumption that they are going to be used. If a deterrent is to be used it is not a deterrent but a weapon: and if a weapon has not got to be used, then it is a deterrent and not a weapon.

Secondly, to define conventional war is almost impossible. Heavy bombers have developed their carrying capacity;

conventional explosives are more lethal than they were. Is a stream of rockets with heads merely containing TNT conventional war? Are gas clouds conventional war? Are submarines driven by nuclear power but armed with ordinary torpedoes conventional weapons?

Thirdly, everyone knows that a concentration of H-bombs might almost destroy life on this planet: in other words, the H-bomb is the greatest deterrent to war that there is. It is, however, a sobering thought that if Hitler in 1945 had alone possessed the nuclear weapon he might have destroyed Europe. However, he had the use of many lethal gases, but even in his extremity he did not use them, and it can only be supposed that he did not do so for fear of reprisals.

Fourthly, since wars have usually been waged for profit or for religious aims, when no profit can possibly be gained and when the religious appeal of making war is somewhat diminished by the fact that there will be no one to embrace the victorious creed, war is less likely than it has ever been.

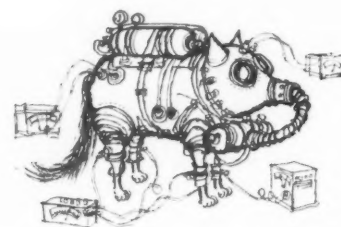


Fifthly, to be without H-bombs is to rely on others for our defence, and this can only mean that our foreign policy in the ultimate must be in the control of others. We have our own interests to defend and our own contribution to make. For example, nothing in American

policy over the Suez crisis would lead any thinking man to suppose that we should trust our interests and our future solely to the United States.

Sixthly, if there is a good reason for having some H-bombs of our own, there is no good reason for not testing them, except the danger to the people from irradiation. The weight of scientific judgment is that this danger is negligible.

To all these perplexities disarmament



is doubtless the answer, but disarmament is indivisible and must be universal. Faced by the risk of being destroyed by H-bombs, or by the risk of being enslaved, or shot by a firing squad, it is not a foregone conclusion that the latter alternative is the more agreeable.

Mr. Punch, however, does not want attempts at axioms: he also wants prophecies. Prophecy is only an agreeable occupation when the prophecy covers a period some safe way beyond the expectation of life of the prophet.

It would seem that the most likely pattern of the next five years is that Russia and China will take whatever our weakness allows, though they will not risk total war, that there will be a continuance of cold war, especially at the fringes, and some lessening of tension.

Why lessening of tension? When the Western world learnt of the huge technical effort of Russia, the first reaction of nearly everyone was fear. Perhaps it should have been hope. Is it possible to turn out one hundred and fifty thousand students on a five-year

course from one Academy alone and then expect them at the end not to start thinking a little bit for themselves?

To turn to longer prophecies. When talking to scientists it is as well to ask them whether they belong to the school which says that in fifty years there will be no one alive on this planet, or whether they embrace the doctrine that in fifty years there will be so many human beings that we shall not be able to feed them. If we are required to make practical plans, it will be found that there is quite a difference between the two points of view. Be that as it may, it is fruitless to predict destruction and not to act because of it.

The probability is that the economic problem of mankind is within a hundred years or so of solution. The prospect of an unlimited source of energy from a raw material for which nothing has to be paid must compel a completely new outlook on the future, and not only on the economic but the social and political future as well. For seven thousand years man has got along with the use of fire: now there is something as new and as revolutionary as the discovery of fire.

Terms like under-developed countries, deficiency areas and the like, will cease to have much meaning when the nuclear age is in full swing. When energy is so cheap, a new world is born. The biological results of the use of radio-isotopes are likely to be no less startling: they will make the word under-nourished as obsolete as the word under-developed.

In the next hundred years or so man will have to turn from the problem of unemployment to that of leisure: in essence the two are the same, but enforced leisure, which is unemployment, is evil, and voluntary unemployment, which is leisure, is good.

How to use leisure and marry it to happiness is going to be quite a problem.

The views expressed in this series do not necessarily represent those of PUNCH. Other contributors will be:

ERIC LINKLATER
Fr. TREVOR HUDDLESTON
H. F. ELLIS
Dr. J. BRONOWSKI
ALISTAIR COOKE
D. ZASLAVSKI (of *Krokodil*)



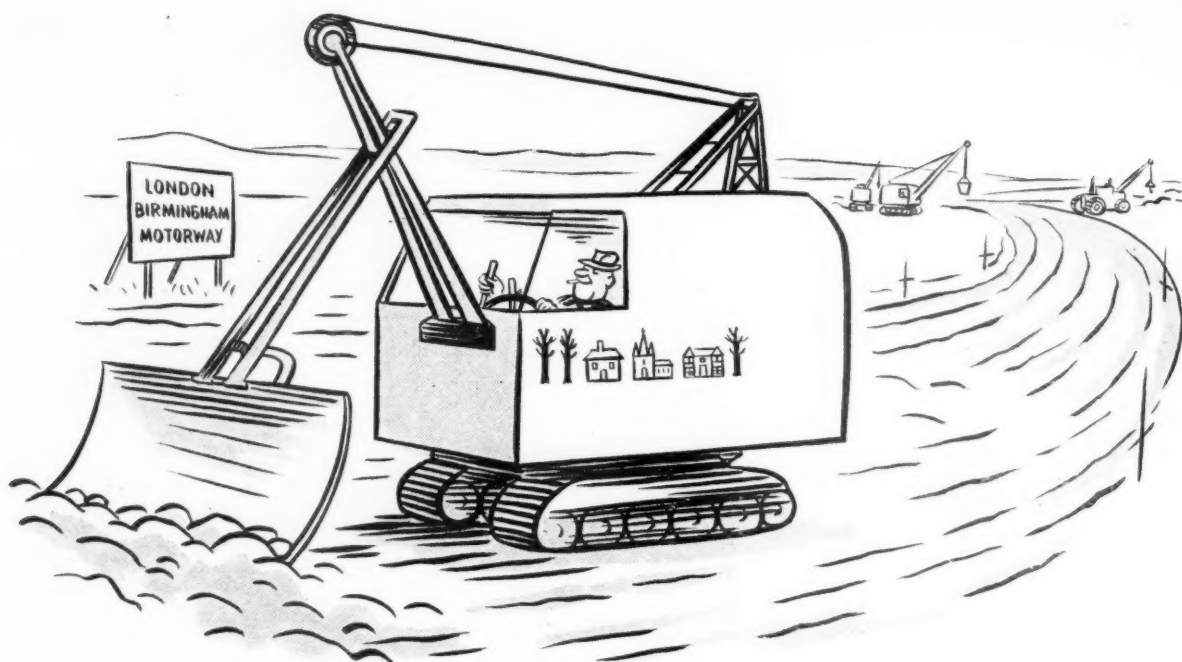
The Russian magazine "Krokodil" makes this comment on the H-bomb dilemma. Against a telescoped background of London two terrified British citizens read "Britain threatens the Soviet Union."

Ornithopter

AN ornithopter is a Russian 'plane
(A Tass reporter recently averred)
Which can by flapping both its wings remain
Poised in the air precisely like a bird.
One can imagine vividly how rum it
Must look, a-flutter in the sky above,
Carrying Khrushchev to some distant Summit
With all the symbolism of the dove.

If Britain were to build an ornithopter
(And what in heaven, one may ask, has stopped her?)
It would be ill-advised, nay, starkly sinister,
To use it for transporting the Prime Minister;
Could any passenger be more mishappable
Than one described by Hailsham as unflappable?

E. V. MILNER



Is There a Medium in the House?

By LIONEL HALE

DESPITE heavy digging in *Hansard* I cannot see any hint that Parliament has awakened to the tremendous possibilities opened up—as a tin-opener opens up the richnesses of *pâté de foie gras*—by events in Czechoslovakia.

Here, at a recent séance, the medium called up the spirits of Thomas Masaryk, Eduard Benes, and (of all people) Thomas Bata, late owner of the Bata shoe factory. They succinctly prophesied the doom of Communism. They also forecast—and here I surmise that old Mr. Bata got hold of the spiritualist's megaphone—the return of Capitalism.

The spirits were right, of course; and it was simple misfortune that in their preoccupation with these larger issues they forgot to predict the immediate future of the medium, a Mrs. Winklerova, who will spend the next eighteen months in prison.

This verdict saddens me, but I console myself with the thought that Mrs. Winklerova's confinement cannot be solitary. No spiritualistic medium can ever be quite alone.

Yet her activities, whatever their outcome, will have justified themselves

if the Western democracies embrace her very sensible plan of calling departed statesmen into consultation. Our present House of Commons will not take it amiss, surely, if I say that the presence of the dead would greatly enliven it.

Members need no longer demand of each other "What did Gladstone say in 1877?" and bang the Dispatch Box. They will rap the Table instead and ask "What does Gladstone say in 1958?"

I think lovingly of their proceedings, on one of these spring evenings. Mr. Speaker will have been chosen, under the new consultative scheme of the House, for none of the qualities usually thought indispensable for the Speaker. It will be quite enough for Mr. Speaker to be the seventh son of a seventh son and to have the capacity not, as at present, for staying awake but of dropping off at any moment.

At 11.59 p.m. (*Hansard* will report) the House went from session into séance and Mr. Speaker went into trance. The lights were lowered. The opposing Front Benches spread out their hands to complete a circle on the

top of the Table. The back-benchers preserved a fitting silence, and Big Ben tolled the witching hour.

Mr. Speaker began to breathe stertorously, and a dim blue light appeared round his head. There was an expectant "Ah!" from the Strangers' Gallery, and the *Hansard* reporters cupped their ears.

From the mouth of Mr. Speaker came a voice, muffled but two and a half octaves up.

THE VOICE (*rapidly, at E in alt.*): Me very very happy to be here. My name Big Chief River Bull.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE (*stiffening*): Did he say "Private Bill"?

THE VOICE: No: me River Bull. Is that Clara?

LEADER OF THE HOUSE (*coldly*): It is not. I mean, the answer is in the negative.

THE VOICE: Is this not house of Mrs. Prendergast, of 122 Rhododendron Drive, S.E.26? (*Cries of "No!" "Question!" and "Divide!"*)

THE VOICE (*fading away rapidly*): Very very sorry. Me only simple Indian chieftain. Wrong address.

Silence ensued. Mr. Speaker, sunk

deeper into his chair, appeared to be also deeper in trance. Gradually there appeared to emerge from his mouth a formless ectoplasm, closely resembling butter-muslin. This eventually took the shape of a rugged face, with a wart on its nose, surmounting a plain, large, white collar. The voice was indistinct at first, but at last three words emerged with the utmost clarity.

CROMWELL: . . . You godless lot!

MR. HENRY BROOKE (*rising*): Speaking as Minister of Housing, may I ask you, Protector, whether you consider I am wise in pressing Clause 16, sub-section 12, of the Rent Act?

CROMWELL: Nay, I beseech you in the bowels of Christ to think whether you may not be mistaken.

(*Opposition cheers and Ministerial counter-cheers.*)

MR. BROOKE (*humbly*): Then I will delete it. But in general what do you consider should be my attitude to the factious and malcontented members of the Opposition?

CROMWELL (*fiercely*): Smite the Amalekites!

(*Ministerial cheers and Opposition counter-cheers. The ectoplasmic CROMWELL weavers at the edges, thins, and gradually disappears, just as the Sergeant-at-Arms is preparing to take away the Bauble.*)

Mr. Speaker continued in trance but in silence, being temporarily unpossessed,

or to let. On such occasions the Members are always at liberty to drift out of the Chamber to the Smoking Room. On Mr. Speaker stirring they are recalled by the Division Bell, running.

Thus, on various occasions, the House could have been guided by the opinion of Disraeli: his views at the time of the Suez crisis might well have been worth hearing. In any Foreign Affairs debate, Pitt the Elder would always show himself informed and impassioned; and Members would become accustomed to see the Younger Pitt disappearing from view, after a trenchant harangue, with a banshee wail of "My country! How I leave my country!"

On economics, Mr. Speaker, in his capacity as medium, would not fail to materialize various experts from the past, speaking now as Locke and now as Ricardo.

At 12.15 a.m. (reports *Hansard*) the Chair was taken by Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Speaker was taken by Adam Smith. Satisfactory astral conditions prevailing, the debate on Industrial Affairs continued:

ADAM SMITH (*in a thick mutter*): . . .

Assuming therefore that our object is to increase the national wealth, this object will be most effectually achieved by perfect industrial liberty. But stay! (*A frozen appears on*

Mr. Speaker's slumbering face). Some inimical presence appears to be in the chamber.

VERY SMALL TIMID MEMBER: On a point of order, sir . . . (*Cries of "Hush!" "Give him air!" and "Where's your hat?"*). On a point of order, sir. Is it in order for the right hon. Leader of the Opposition to be in simultaneous trance?

(*All eyes turn to MR. GAITSKELL, whose upturned gaze and rapt expression show him to be in a state of catalepsy.*)

MR. GAITSKELL: I am John Stuart Mill . . .

ADAM SMITH: Mercy on us! Farewell, farewell . . . (*His voice fades away.*)

MR. GAITSKELL-MILL: The despotism of custom, I remind hon. Members, is everywhere the standing hindrance to human advancement. But let us not forget the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Any questions?

MR. SPEAKER (*hitting E in Alt. immediately*): Me your old friend River Bull again. All is beautiful over here. Lush grasses wave in breeze, birds sing, flowers bloom. All is peace. Is Clara there yet? (*The House adjourns, and goes home to bed.*)

Things might not always, in fact, go smoothly. But is not the principle a good one, and should we not be grateful to Czechoslovakia? Would the whole thing not raise the spirits of the House?

Brush Up Your Secretaryship

By ALEX ATKINSON

THE Office Management Association recently promoted an intensive five-day course for senior private secretaries and personal assistants. The General Paper reproduced below was not included, which seems a pity. Those senior private secretaries and personal assistants who didn't have a chance to attend the course (and even those who did) are here and now invited to try their skill and cunning.

1. Choose the most appropriate euphemism from the list placed beside each of the following words and phrases:

- (a) "rat race" (the wheels of commerce, opportunities in industry, the business world);
- (b) "swan" (essential business trip,

- a booze-up in Paris, extended lunch-hour);
- (c) "old Fat Guts" (our respected General Manager, him in there, the Big Wheel);

2. Assuming that the following nine people have somehow been gathered together in your ante-room, place them in strict order of precedence for the purpose of (a) serving them with tea, (b) telling them about your father's arthritis, (c) offering them sweets, (d) complaining about the jammed margin-release on your typewriter, (e) inflating your chest at them:

- (1) The boss's wife, who has brought you a nice geranium in a pot.
- (2) A visiting big shot from the

- London office, who has carefully squeezed your elbow twice already.
- (3) His secretary, whose job you covet.





- (4) The boss's mistress, who trusts you.
- (5) The boss, who doesn't.
- (6) The junior representative of a valued customer, who has come to cancel an order.
- (7) The assistant sales-manager, secretly your lover.
- (8) The managing director of a rival firm.
- (9) Your mother, who has gone and brought your sandwiches again.

3. To what extent has your behaviour during working hours been influenced by such films as *Executive Suite*? Defend your attitude.

4. Give concise explanations (with maps and/or diagrams) of the following:

- (a) a cartel,
- (b) some liquid assets,
- (c) a business lunch,
- (d) a take-over bid.

5. Give one good reason why you should have an expense account. (Not more than two thousand words.)

6. Your boss has announced that he wants you to fly to New York with him for an important three-day conference. Your life's ambition is to see Macy's and the Rockefeller Centre, you have a rich uncle living on Second Avenue, and if you refuse to go that man-crazy Miss Springer is sure to be chosen instead. On the other hand, you have promised to take your ailing little brother to the Zoo on one of the three days in question, and you happen to know that a half-hour transatlantic telephone conversation will achieve all that the proposed conference could achieve, at a saving to the firm of several hundred pounds. What precisely should you tell your boss?

7. Place the following phrases, with scrupulous accuracy, in descending order of familiarity:

- (a) Yours faithfully;
- (b) fraternally yours;
- (c) yours very truly;
- (d) ever yours;
- (e) yours;
- (f) yours sincerely;
- (g) yours in haste;
- (h) all the best;
- (i) cordially yours;
- (j) yours truly;
- (k) yours etc.;
- (l) your obedient servant.

8. Which of these services do you believe you should reasonably be expected to perform for your boss?

- (a) Cutting his hair.
- (b) Reminding him of your birthday, his wedding anniversary, and his capacity for dry martinis.

- (c) Placing his bets.
- (d) Correcting his spelling, grammar, accent, manners and simple arithmetic.

9. Would you sooner hear yourself described as

- (a) indispensable,
- (b) a drudge,
- (c) a treasure,
- (d) smashing, or
- (e) that bloody woman out there?

Award yourself marks.

Fathers of Science—IV

CHARLES AUGUSTIN DE COULOMB, 1736-1806

("Born at Angoulême. Verified Priestley's Law of Electrical Repulsions by means of the Torsion Balance.")

RING out the Bells of Angoulême!
Ye Burghers drink with loud acclaim

In litres or in gallons
To Charles Coulomb
Whose rare aplomb,
Whose tactfulness,
Whose sheer finesse
Devised the Torsion Balance.

How quiet seems the little town,*
How all unconscious of renown,
No carnival and no parade,
No pompiers (or fire brigade)
As up and down the silent streets
I wander in my dreams—like Keats—
A solitary singer;
The palace of the Dukes is still,

*A further account of the Capital of Charente may be found in my book entitled *Angoulême Unvisited*.

One hears the tinkling of a rill
And in the bistros and the bars
Stout men are drinking. Shine the stars.

But does no memory linger

Of one whose infant feet have trod
These very stones? It does seem odd
(And may in fact be not the truth
That no one recollects this youth).
Let Honour speak! Let Glory say
In any case Hurrah! Hurrah!
Ring out the Bells of Angoulême!
Ye Burghers toast with loud acclaim
The unexampled talents
Of Charles Coulomb
Whose rare aplomb,
Whose tactfulness, whose *savoir-faire*
Whose *bonhomie*, whose Gallic *flair*
Designed the Torsion Balance.

EVOE

To Finish the Season

By A. L. RICHARDS

The following accounts of the Barchester Rugby football match against Marchester and the last day of the season with the Barsethshire hounds were received too late for publication in "The Barseth Chronicle" owing to the joint end-of-season festivities.

A GREAT PACK

SOME excellent and exciting sport was enjoyed when Barchester met Marchester before a large and enthusiastic gathering of foot-followers; Barchester eventually winning a fine match by a brace and a half of points to nil.

Promptly on time a ball found in the pavilion went away very fast down wind into the Barchester country, but, swinging right-handed over the railway, it was lost and the referee took the pack back for a fresh draw in the centre of the field.

Then, almost at once, a new and very yellow ball, probably an outlier, was found in some straw near the stands and went away in the open with the Marchester forwards in full cry.

Bearing to the right they ran on at great speed almost to the twenty-five, where they were checked after over-running the ball. Cast back, however, they soon picked up the line once more and went on until they were headed by the full-back.

Here they were stopped and from the ensuing draw Barchester sent the ball out left-handed. Then, at once, their three-quarters were moving very fast on a breast-high scent right up to the half-way line. And without dwelling here, they went on at a pace too good to inquire, until, swinging left towards the railway, they marked to ground near the corner flag.

This was a capital run of some seventy-five yards, or nearly a hundred yards as backs ran, and Barchester thoroughly deserved their good score. Little could be done with the kick, although much time was spent in digging.

From then on the Barchester pack gained complete ascendancy and experienced little difficulty in maintaining the lead.

The pace, by that time, had begun to tell and the field had thinned out considerably. It was particularly pleasant, therefore, to see the Barchester captain still well up with his pack when the whistle sounded for going home.

BARSETSHIRE HOUNDS WIN

MEETING at home on Saturday the Barsethshire hounds won an exciting game before what must have been a record crowd.

At first there was some difficulty with the set scrums, far too many hounds standing about on the outskirts and failing to get their heads down in the tight. Soon, however, after penalties had been awarded for barging, obstruction and similar infringements, the pack began to settle down.

Then, suddenly, a fox broke away cleverly on the blind side and seemed certain to touch down after swerving outwards to the right wing. A quick wheel, however, put the hounds into an attacking position and they started a magnificent foot rush. But their fox, after being corner-flagged by an over-eager spectator, jinked back and, selling the dummy, ran clean through an uncertain defence.

There followed a period of rather scrappy play in the loose, hounds finding it difficult to open up the game and riders frequently being warned for riding dangerously near off-side. But soon the Master ordered another set scrum and this time a big fox, running straight and hard down the middle of the field, was splendidly tackled and brought down.

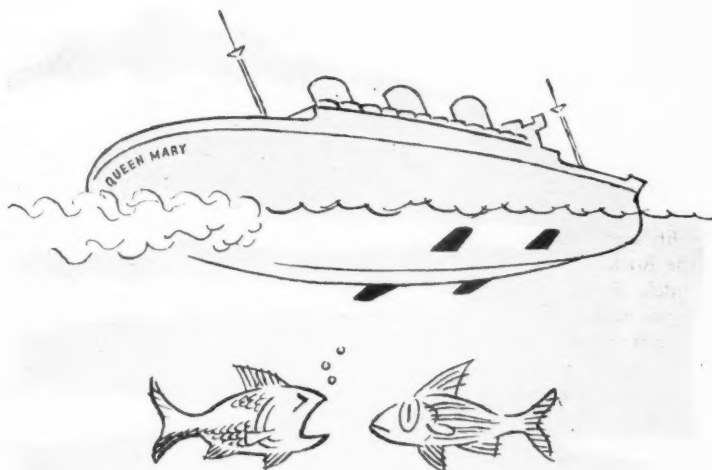
Encouraged by this score the Hunt attacked strongly on the right, but their fox ran into touch across the river. And from here, penalized by the strong current, hounds were forced back into their own half. Nevertheless, they soon returned to the attack and, after a delightful exhibition of open play, scored again just before the final whistle sounded.

2 2

"THE LITTLE THEATRE OF TEHRAN offers the following service to its Patrons . . . If you will give your Name and Address at the Box-office before you leave the Theatre, we will keep you informed of your activities."

Notice in theatre programme

And you know what yours are.



FRANK FINCH

"Oh—just a belated response to environment."

Toby Competitions

No. 10—Highly Esteemed Classic

WRITE an excerpt, maximum 20 lines, from *Titus Andronicus* as adapted by the Goons.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive Toby bookmarks. Entries (any number, but each on a separate piece of paper and accompanied by a separate entry token, cut out from the bottom left-hand corner of this page) by first post on Friday, April 11, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 10, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 7 ("No, Thanks")

The challenge was to write an original and convincing excuse for not accepting an invitation to a party. There was originality in plenty but not all the explanations carried conviction. Reasons for non-attendance ranged from the impending dissolution of the world to an expected crisis in the domestic life of a budgerigar, passing through ingenious variations on Lenten abstinence, thinly veiled hints at difficulties with the police, embarrassments caused by change of sex, unfavourable astrological conditions, complications in outer space and startling warnings by psychiatrists.

One invitee pleaded "an unfortunate accident with his do-it-yourself marriage kit." Something should be said for the extreme courage and simplicity of the briefest entry: "I regret that I cannot accept because I would really rather not." Fears of being radioactive deterred many potential guests, and others were put off by dire forebodings in macabre dreams. Imagining Mr. Strydom as the host, one competitor pointed out that a

search of family records had shown that her great-great-grandmother had one-sixth pure Negro blood.

The prize is awarded to

GEORGE COULOURIS
CHESTNUT COTTAGE
VALE OF HEALTH
HAMPSTEAD, N.W.3

not for a funny entry but for one which seems to grasp a basic principle of human relationship and express it with admirable tact and candour:

I do so want to come to your evening at home. Yet, if I do, everything is going to be so different. And how do we know that it will be for the better? I've never written a letter like this before, but I'm determined to say what I really honestly think. As you know, we've been neighbours now for seven years without ever meeting socially. You know, too, how perfectly it has worked out. How grateful we were when you fed the goldfish for two weeks two years ago and scared away possible burglars. Goodness knows we are only too happy to take in your laundry parcel on those Monday mornings when your wife has to go out early. How we always like meeting casually and passing the time of day. To change all this, to take the chance of starting something, something we both might not like—"It's our turn to ask them... It's so long since we had them over"—do you think it's worth it? I wouldn't write this unless I felt deeply that you are of the same turn of mind.

A. J. M. Stewart, 25 Charlbury Road, Oxford, led the field in space thought:

We would so much have liked to see the Hunt-Crawleys again, but we can't possibly, darling. The beastly experimental station has taken Henry's head off. It's very tippety-top secret, but *bodies* will be unnecessary in the new rocket; they'll just have *heads*, to save space. Of course when the question of live experiment came before the board Henry stuck his neck out as always, and volunteered. I went to visit him this morning (of course I've got his body at home with a sweet little engineer to keep it going); he's on a steel pedestal with those oxygen sausage things and a tiny electric blood-pump built in, and was chatting gaily. You ask about Aunt Sarah. Darling, aren't scientific families a bore! She's tethered in a great dome in what they call "conditions of no gravity." Lastly myself, oh dear, it's too shaming. Paul came home from South Africa on Saturday with his head full of anti-segregation and work he's been doing on pigments in the skin. He gave me three little pricks and I'm all black! It takes a week to wear off and I look too awful in a sari. I'm sorry the Hunt-Crawleys sail on the 27th. Henry is going to be put together again on the 28th.

Another cosmic contribution was from A. G. Hine, 5 Hatton Gardens, Newark, Notts.:

If my latest revised calculations are correct a collision between earth and the

body I call Zyttron will almost certainly take place at about 9 p.m. on April 1, the night of the party. The effect may well extinguish all animal and human life at least in the Northern Hemisphere. My wife and I are therefore not at present accepting any formal engagements after the end of March.

A nice exercise in the bizarre from P.O. Race, R.A.F., Coltishall, Norfolk:

LONDINIUM, 17 JUNE, A.D. 158

I was delighted to get your kind invitation to the S.C.R. to meet Scimpitz from Cologne University; it would have been an honour to meet one who has done so much for comparative mesolithics. Rather inopportunately, however, success finally crowned the efforts of Mr. Ball from our mathematics department to devise a method of enabling me to return to the above date to verify my theory on the debasement of Romano-British coins. I thought of inserting my apologies to you in the works of some contemporary (to me) historian, but I realized this is impossible, for if such an interpolation occurred in any extant history author, say Tacitus, I should certainly have heard of it. In the end, as you see, I had this letter engraved on a lead tablet and buried in the south-west corner of the site of your garden, where I know you were planning to excavate a rock garden to-day.

Finally, some commendable briefs:

Devastated to miss your lovely party but I'm having my legs straightened to suit the new short skirts, and since that means I have to skip the giddy whirl till they set I might as well get a new hair colour and one last face-lift for luck. Darling, you will ask the new "me" to your next party, won't you?—Elizabeth Ferguson, 17 Lawrence Street, Glasgow

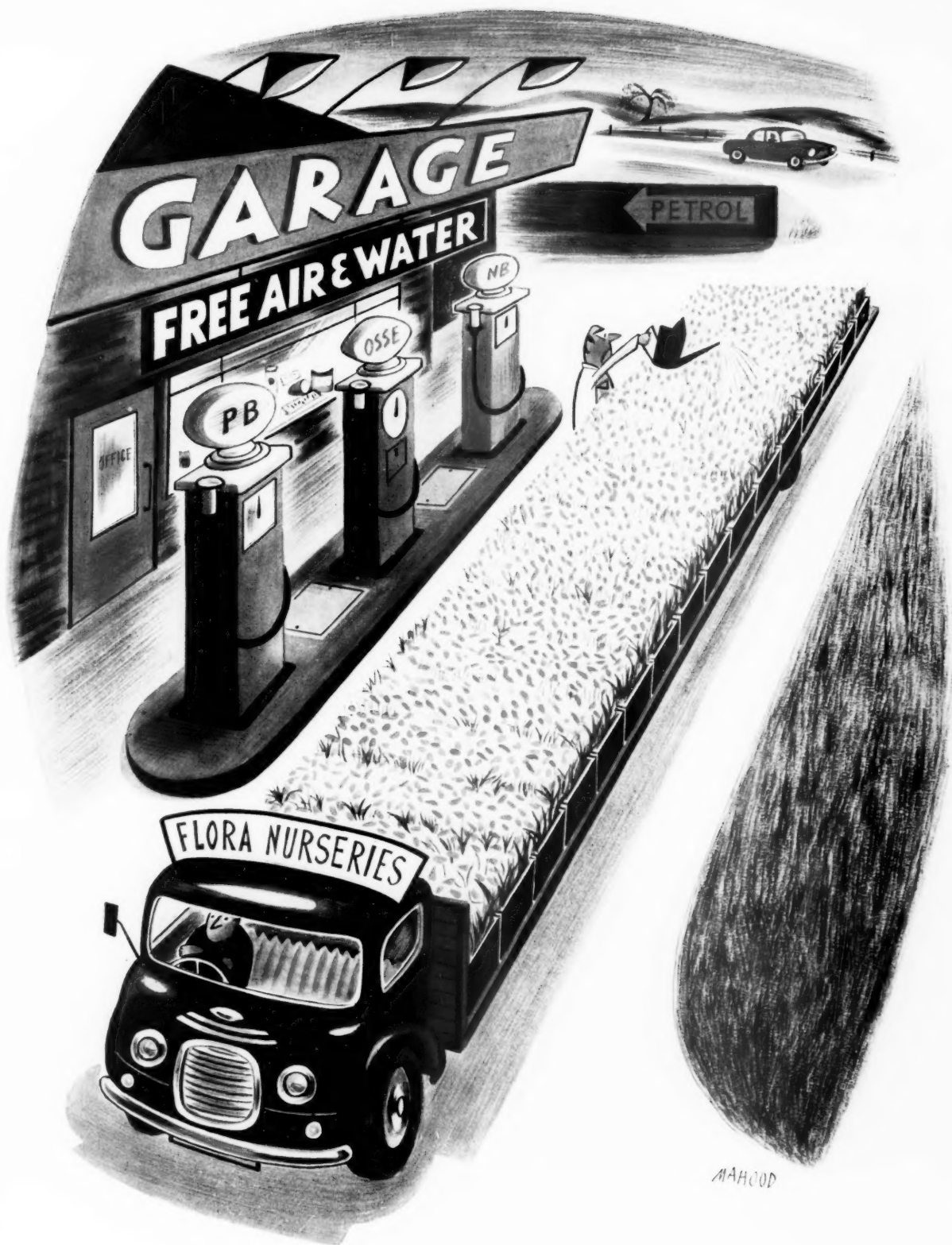
... but as I expect to hear shortly that I have been granted a ticket for *My Fair Lady* you will understand that I must keep my engagement book blank for the time being.—Gerald Hinch, 15 Grotto Road, Weybridge, Surrey

Since I am now a member of Moral Rearmament I have sought guidance on this invitation. I write to say that I have been guided not to come.—A. H. Kirkby, 2 Tichborne Street, Leicester

I find myself unable to accept your invitation. Though not yet committed I expect to be. This is a trial I must bear. You will understand how deep are my regrets when I add that I would rather be your guest than Her Majesty's.—R. G. Walker, 54 Christ Church Road, Norwich

Toby bookmarks have been sent to the following, in addition to those quoted above: H. Stuart Baker, Harwell, Berks; K. L. Koppel, 75 Redington Road, London, N.W.3; J. H. M. Sykes, 71 Chaucer Road, Bedford; D. J. Roaf, 218 Woodstock Road, Oxford; P. Kennard Davis, On-the-Hill, Pilton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset; Mrs. E. B. Ransome, Emlin Hall, Torver, Coniston, Lancs.; P. R. Wellings, "Lowood," Dumbah Lane, Prestbury, Macclesfield, Cheshire; Miss M. Cleveland-Smith, Highland Cottage, Park Road, Clevedon, Somerset.

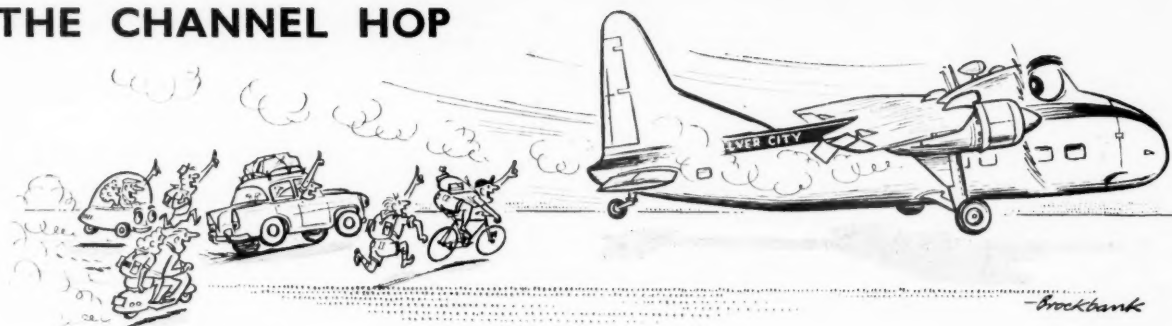






"Slow down through the breakers, don't splash wine-dark sea on my peplum, and turn right for Crete past the headland."

THE CHANNEL HOP



SO long as there are citizens ready to fly to Le Touquet or Deauville, taking their Rolls-Royces with them, for a week-end of *chemin de fer*, it is unfair to talk of the low prestige of the British holidaymaker on the Continent.

The cost per mile of using an air-transported limousine as a taxi between hotel and casino is not a subject which can decently be investigated. Sometimes, however, the week-enders have been known to make brief tours of the French countryside in between sessions at the tables, thus doing much to put the operation on a sound economic footing.

It should not be thought that lush gambling expeditions are the mainstay of the aerial car ferry which plies from Lydd, in the Romney Marshes, and Southampton to the Continental resorts, or that the Monday morning homeward traffic is monopolized by depressed, dark-chinned men still in evening dress.

The ferry accepts such typical British holidaymakers as managing directors on scooters, blondes in bubble cars, students in converted London taxis, and take-over men travelling *en grand seigneur* with a plurality of gin-palaces. It also welcomes dug-out grandams who fear the air less than they fear the foreigner, families from the Midlands towing yachts, invalids in motor chairs heading for the Alps, cyclists sworn to reach Paris by nightfall, and married couples who have begun to wonder whether the jolly pair who accepted their offer of a lift to Nice, on an expense-sharing basis, could be dropped off on some pretext in Paris.

In the reverse direction the air ferry brings such foreigners as have braced themselves to explore the Welfare State, assorted monarchs, playboys, papal counts and homing rally drivers in their battered cars. It also brings from time

to time a Polish concert pianist with his grand piano on a trailer.

The air ferry, once described by a reporter of the *Wall Street Journal* as "a pee-wee air line," is to-day anything but pee-wee. Starting, as doubtless many an air line started, with one hired aircraft and a windsock, the service is now, after ten years, as hallowed a British institution as the holiday camp. Yet, so far as is known, no one ever wrote to *The Times* demanding such an amenity.

The first fare-paying vehicle to be air-transported across the English Channel belonged to an entrepreneur who, on July 7, 1948, found himself in a tiresome dilemma at Le Touquet. Wishing to return home he was unable to decide whether to do so in his Bentley or his private aircraft. Just then a Bristol freighter, its nose gay with the painted flags of many nations, touched down on a proving flight from England and decanted an Armstrong-Siddeley belonging to Air Commodore Griffith Powell. The Bentley owner forked out 30,000 francs and saw his vehicle whisked off, along with the Armstrong, in the direction (as they assured him) of Lympne.

One who watched this historic episode was an insurance representative who had flown over to Le Touquet in a light aeroplane, with the object (it was believed) of observing the effect on the freighter if a car fell out over the Channel.

It was an encouraging start for the pioneers of the ferry, who did not suspect that they were on the edge of a very good thing indeed. They were restless and resourceful men who had dabbled in many post-war aerial projects, including the flying of mining equipment to Broken Hill (the "Silver City" of New South Wales) and the lifting

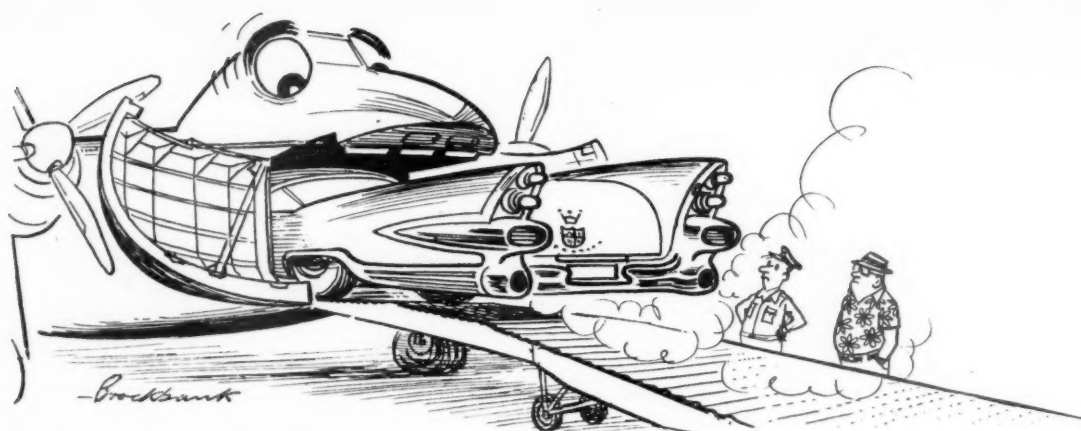
By E. S. TURNER

of Sir Winston Churchill to Marrakesh. They had also assisted, more usefully than some, in the partition of India by flying Hindus out of Pakistan and Muslims out of India.

It says much for the cross-Channel carriage trade in the early days that they did not look askance at the grass runways of Lympne and the exiguity of the ground staff. The functions of receptionist, traffic officer, car loader and telephonist were united in one man, who occupied a van. His telephone belonged to the Ministry of Civil Aviation police, who had first claim on it for their own recondite purposes.

It has long been the belief of H.M. Customs that the purpose of British motorists in visiting the Continent is to sell their engines for large sums, buy new ones for a fraction of the price and bring back the profits in the form of solid gold bumpers or dummy tanks full of watches. The Customs staff who struggled to frustrate this disreputable traffic at Lympne had to do so in one corner of an English field, whence the sheep were excluded by wire. Opening up intimate baggage in the rain is not an arrangement which gives Customs or passengers a proper opportunity for the exchange of traditional courtesies. However, those who have seen the film *The Birthday Present*, in which a traveller by air ferry tries to smuggle home a diamond watch for his wife, will know that the Customs facilities in England have since been greatly improved.

In 1949 the cheapest car on the British market was driven from London to Paris, via the air ferry, and beat the Golden Arrow by one hour and twenty minutes. Rapidly, it became a popular feat of one-upmanship to air-lift one's car to France. The occasion could be



commemorated with a windscreen sticker reading "We Flew The Channel," as it can nowadays, more permanently, with a silver badge mounted (at owner's expense) on the car. There were, of course, a few stuffy passengers who declined the offer of stickers, but they were un-English types who looked on motoring as mere transportation (the same types who, to-day, having flown their cars over the Channel, send them by rail to Lyons, where nobody offers them a sticker reading "We Crossed France By Rail").

Lympne could not cope with the "G.B." traffic and by 1954 a new airport was being built at Lydd. The move had hardly been made before some of the old hands were sighing for the carefree, informal days of the first lustrum. At Lympne, in bad weather, it was not

unknown for the ground staff (when they numbered eleven) to play the waiting passengers at cricket. In those days passengers and staff were all pioneers together. Regrettably there is no cricket pitch at Lydd, where the weather is notoriously good. Passengers are apt to find themselves in Le Touquet before they have finished their cigars, fed the baby or picked the confetti from each other's hair.

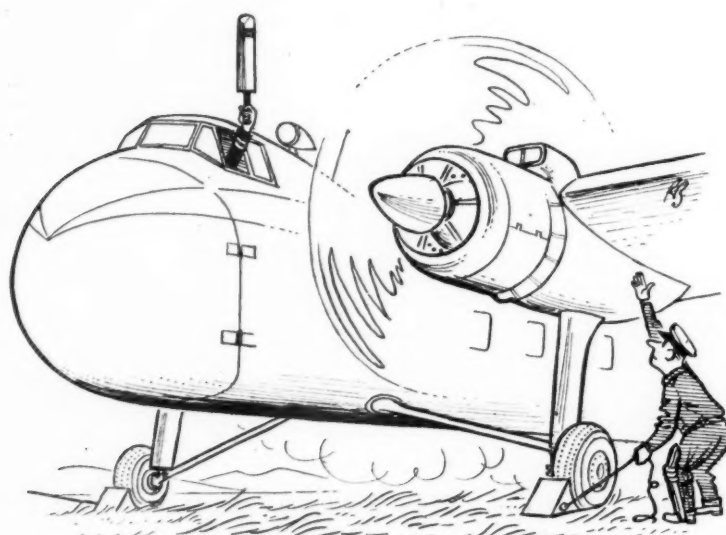
In the peak season at Lydd, Bristol freighters, gravid with glistening and not-so-glistening cars, are touching down or taking off every three minutes. This is not a time when the ground staff is especially anxious to welcome piano trailers, actresses travelling with former husbands, and the ever-widening range of passengers who cannot descend from aircraft without being newsreel and

televised. If they must come, at least let them not come in cars with wheel spats; for all spats must come off.

Although the air ferry has enjoyed wide publicity (including headlines like *Quand les "Jaguar" Ont des Ailes*) many motorists cherish misconceptions about the service. A good many imagine that they will be able to sit in their cars during the crossing, just as they would on the beach at home. If they did they would double their chances of being air-sick in rough weather, for any motion of the aircraft sets up a sympathetic, or rather an unsympathetic, motion of the car on its springs. In fact the passengers sit in their own compartment, separated by a bulkhead from their vehicles, along with cyclists (whose machines are carried for 2s. 6d.) and such eccentrics as still cross the Channel without any wheeled transport whatever. In the old days the bulkhead was a mere curtain, behind which the family car could be seen gnawing impatiently at its shackles.

The fact that passengers may not sit in the car is, of course, a disappointment to the traveller who hoped to listen to the Test Match commentary on the way over, but the advent of the pocket radio has overcome this handicap.

Nervous women drivers have been heard to say that they would never travel by air ferry because they would be frightened to reverse down those horrible ramps in front of a lot of Frenchmen. In fact they are not even allowed to drive up the ramps in front of a lot of Englishmen. This rule sometimes causes misgivings in the type of driver who, having monopolized the controls of his car for twenty years, is convinced that no one else has the



secret of setting it in motion. One reason for the rule is that certain cars are too wide to allow the driver to get out when the vehicle is loaded, and an exit via the window is necessary. Many suburban motorists with narrow garages are, of course, accustomed to this means of exit, but not every traveller in a Cadillac has the necessary knack. It can be revealed that the driver of the Queen's limousine was allowed to drive the vehicle on to the aircraft; what he did after that is a Palace secret.

The air ferry has bred a new type of virtuoso who is capable of driving a hundred makes or marks of car, on sight, half the time without seeing where he is going. His activities are necessarily confined to bottom gear and reverse. Most of us who are not smash-and-grab men ponder for a few minutes before presuming to start up a strange car, but at Lydd on a busy day there is no time for contemplation. It can be a humbling experience for the owner of an exotic equipage like a Facel Vega, who is all ready to give the driver a half-hour's initiation into its arcana, to see him jump in and handle it as confidently as a London taximan manipulates his cab. The drivers are quite accustomed to those French cars which lift themselves up from a relaxed position when the engine is started.

In the line of duty the drivers visit the Motor Show to see for themselves what perverse new controls have been invented, or what fresh attempts have been made to design an unshacklable wheel. No doubt they follow with interest, as do all of us, the perennial and unremitting attempts of the car industry to invent an efficient hand-brake.

Visits to the Motor Show do not, of course, assist the drivers to handle veteran cars with tiller steering. The ferry company is prepared to concede that, on one occasion, one of its drivers was seen taking lessons on a 50-year-old

car on an airport road. In an emergency, however, most veteran cars can be manhandled aboard.

For an air pilot the ferrying of motor-cars may seem a humdrum assignment. He has no hostess to flirt with, and—since the hop to Le Touquet takes only twenty minutes—he cannot leave the controls to settle down for a game of solo with the boys, or whatever pilots do over the North Pole. He faces considerably more landings and take-offs in a day than the long-distance pilot. Nevertheless, for the domesticated flyer (and it seems there are such) it is an ideal job. In what other air line can a pilot be reasonably sure of sleeping in his own bed every night? As likely as not, that flicker of the navigation lights you saw as the freighter skirted Dymchurch at dusk was a signal to the pilot's wife to put the pie in the oven. One pilot, as was perhaps inevitable, married a French girl, went native and made his home in Le Touquet. Unlike his colleagues, he was much concerned to finish the day's operations in France.

Possibly the nastiest setback the air ferry had to face was the slashing of the travel allowance, in 1952, to £25. Even the most fervid gambler thinks twice about taking his wife and Rolls to Le Touquet at a round-trip cost (then) of £57 in order to spend £25 each. Even so, large numbers of the

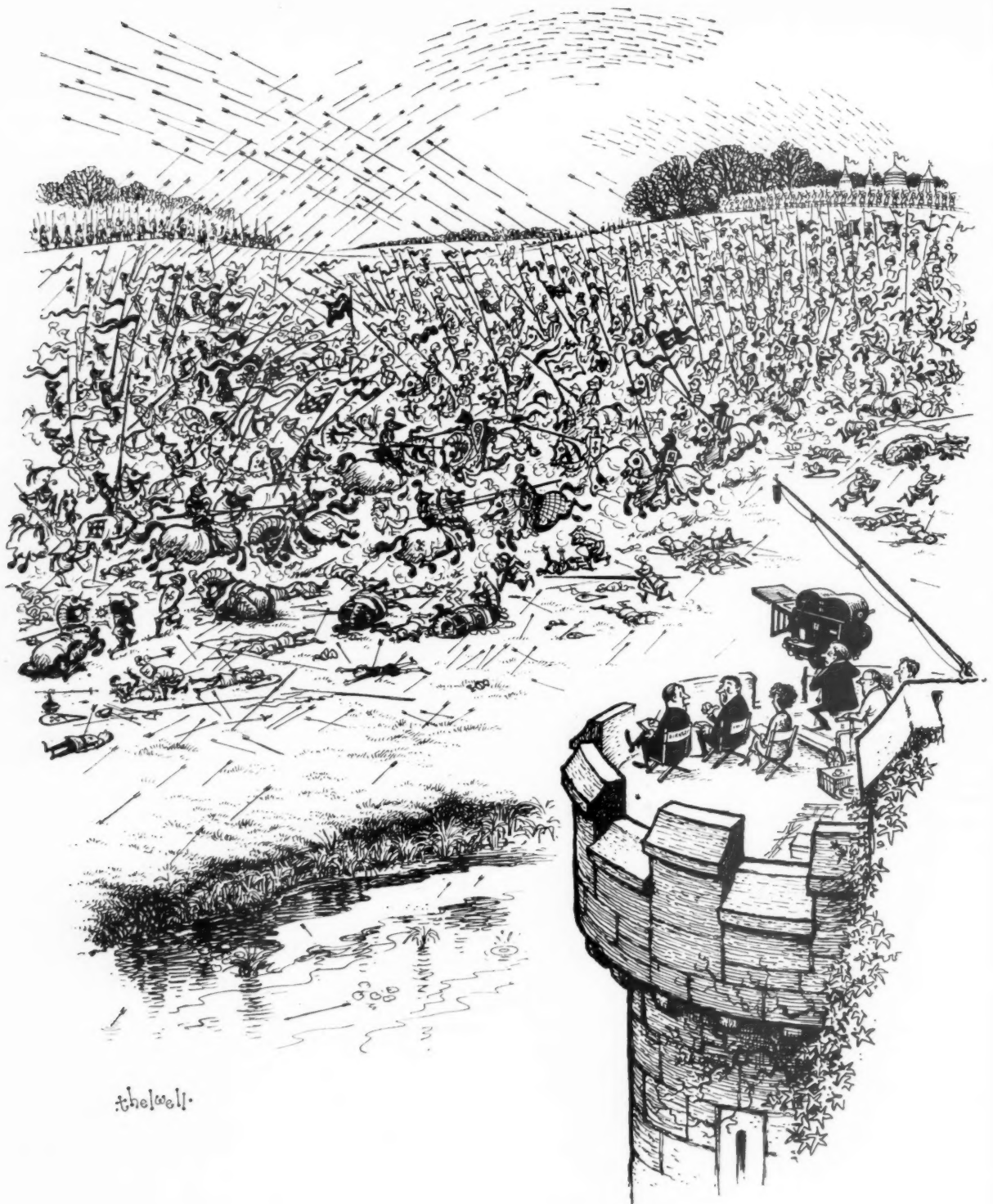
petrolariat contrived to spend holidays abroad that year.

To try to run an air line on seasonal trade is as quick a way to Carey Street as any. The car ferry, therefore, carries a good deal of freight. Every Sunday morning it brings in impressive quantities of cream cheese. It also flies pigs, pigeons and racehorses. The extent to which the skies are filled, at any given moment, with livestock is insufficiently realized.

The aerial ferry, with its ten routes, is not an enterprise which can readily be copied. In order to start up such a service with any prospects of success it is necessary to find a part of the globe where the nationals of one country, resenting their laws, cooking, climate and highways, are eager to cross a narrow expanse of water in order to have these deficiencies remedied. This sort of situation is not easy to discover, search the map as one will. To fly cars for more than a few miles is uneconomic, and there must be good freight pickings.

Down at Lydd they follow the talks on the Channel Tunnel with polite, or fairly polite, interest. No one can accuse them of under-estimating the horrors of driving with a family through a fume-filled burrow twenty-two miles long. However, they lose no sleep over the tunnel proposal. They have bored their own tunnels through the air to France.

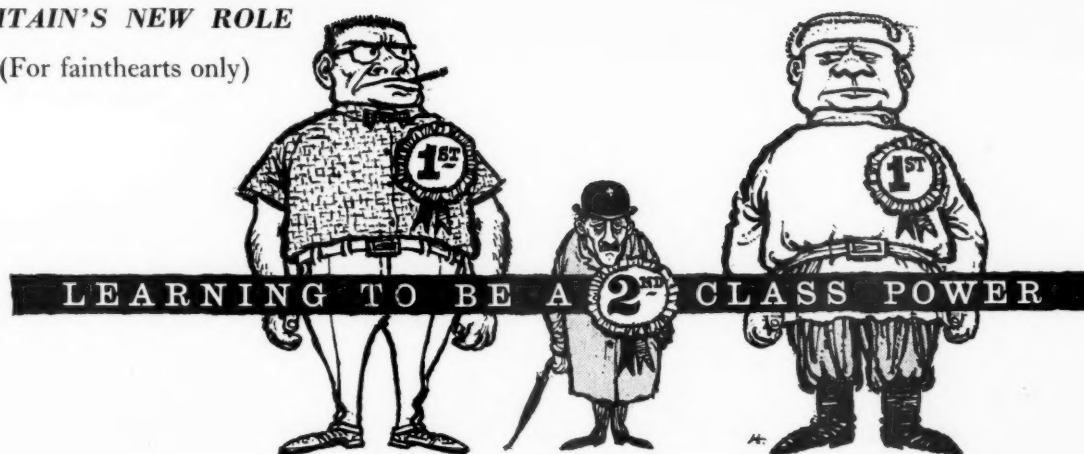




"I'm more concerned about how they act when they find out we can't afford to pay them."

BRITAIN'S NEW ROLE

(For fainthearts only)

*Lotus the Leveller*

THE glories of our blood and state
 Need to be dexterously played;
 A modern nation's gladdest fate
 Is to attract the tourist trade.
 Sceptre and crown
 Must tumble down
 If used to further interests
 That do not lure the foreign guests.

Some men with rockets cleave the skies
 Or build up wealth in atom-piles.
 How mortal is their merchandise
 Beside a store of Norman aisles!
 Their foreign trade
 May swiftly fade,
 Their sputniks vanish in the blue
 As stained-glass windows never do.

Should Morris Dancers oust the Motors
 And maypoles grace each factory,
 Visitors would get larger quotas
 Of ever-cheapened currency,
 The sterling pound
 Fall to the ground
 And in the—dust?—take equal rank
 Beside the lira and the franc.

The nations battle overseas,
 The missiles scorch, the tanks advance,
 While we continue at our ease
 With cattle-show and floral dance.
 Great powers must come
 To frightful doom:
 Only the impotent but gay
 Can hope to face the world to-day.

B. A. YOUNG

IN no theatre of the world struggle are the advantages of inferiority more marked than in that concerned with politics and economics. Once it has been established and accepted that Britain is operating in the second division, and not struggling to avoid relegation from the ranks of the mighty, wonderful possibilities begin to open up.

Our politicians, economists and business men suddenly become adequate. Or *seem* adequate. An act or a speech of staggering stupidity can be laughed off as typical and reasonable second-class matter. "See old Macmillan's [or Gaitskell's] speech in the House last night?" says the *Telegraph* man in the corner of the 8.50 from Dorking. "Not bad at all for a secondary."

"Splendid example of mediocrity," says the representative of Top People.

"Yes, ingeniously poverty-stricken," says the *Guardian*.

Second-class powers, you see, are not ashamed of being poor, of being too poor to shoulder the white man's burden or to compete with first-class powers in providing aid for uncommitted countries, or to run expensive face-saving embassies, consulates and so on in foreign parts, or to pioneer in ruinously costly fields of science and industry. When a second-class power needs help it has only to indicate to the world that it is *uncommitted* and the offers come rolling in. The technique is simple. A second-class power decides that its roads and railways are completely out of date, but that rebuilding cannot be financed without ruining the nation's tax structure and meddling with welfare. The Government therefore instructs its representatives abroad to hint at a possible change in foreign policy. Response is prompt. The West suggest a loan of countless dollars repayable (there is always a waiver clause) in annual dollops of depreciating currency over (say) two thousand years: the East offer the free labour of twenty million skilled Siberians.

Second-class powers can hardly wait for China to become fully first-class. Three sources of foreign aid are better than two.

Second-class powers are intelligent enough to realize that history isn't made overnight. They allow first-class powers (remarkably



touchy they are about matters of precedence) to pioneer in science, engineering and technics, wait for the pioneers to exhaust themselves or run into economic depression, and then acquire the serial rights in inventions and discoveries at knock-down prices. For hundreds of years the cunning Russians remained second-class, specializing solely in steamrollers. Then, like fools, they caught up.

Once a country goes in for prestige on the grand scale it is doomed to bureaucracy. Russia keeps going only by devoting one third of her manpower to sputniks, rockets and submarines, one third to claiming the invention of the steam engine, radar, penicillin, the long-wall face coalmining system and the wheel, and one third to policing the scientists and scribes. Second-rate powers, if they did but know it, can rub along on one decent typing pool.

If the people of the U.S.A. decide that two cars in every garage are enough the fact is reported in headlines and the world talks of an American recession. Investors remove their funds from New York, sell madly on Wall Street, cancel bookings, stop chewing gum. Great powers are *always* booming or slumping: the rest of the world won't let them exist in a state of comfortable economic equilibrium. Second-class powers, on the other hand, can resort to chicanery, restrictive practices and stunts without any newspaper, radio station or tape-machine apparently being any the wiser. When Britain shoved up the Bank Rate to seven per cent and the skies refused to fall the event was hailed by most domestic authorities as a sign of Albion's greatness and flinty fiscal resolve: another possible explanation is that the world hardly bothered to notice what the British Treasury and the Bank of England were up to.



The London School of Economics could not do this country a greater service at present than to turn out a uniform stream of second-class honours graduates with a proper understanding of Britain's role and limitless opportunities in this age of unreason.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



"I am sorry, m'sieu, there is no longer an Hotel Bristol, or Grande Bretagne—only the Baltimore, Washington, and États-Unis."

Second-class Behaviour Abroad

ABANDONMENT of world leadership means a much easier time for the Briton travelling abroad. Appended is a useful ten-point guide:

1. *Appearances, keeping up.* It is no longer necessary to preserve British prestige. The loud, peremptory tone of command, once obligatory, may be dropped to a cringing mumble. This not only wards off laryngitis but at last gives rein to a long-standing instinct to do just that.

2. *Food and Drink.* Local dishes and wines may now be enjoyed with an easy conscience. Mercifully gone are the days when you had to wave away the *croissants* and shout for eggs-and-bacon. Waiters are now aware that British phlegm is a myth: to insist on drinking fusty, costly old gin from an unlabelled bottle will not impress them. Swill cognac recklessly.

3. *Clothes and Luggage.* Practically your whole wardrobe can go for cleaning while you are away. An ex-W.D. shirt and shorts will get you anywhere you want to go except the *salle privée* of the local casino—and even in there if business is thin. Your burning sense of shame at never having owned a solid rawhide baggage-set can be forgotten;

this year the cardboard suitcase with the broken handle will be no less than anyone expects, and will serve, in fact, as the proud badge of a man who knows his place.

4. *Money.* You can be mean and haggling. Never again the anguish of handing over a fistful of lire, conscious of being done but fearful to make a scene. Make scenes. Explain that the Bank of England is crumbling and you with it. Where you would once have paid twice the sum demanded for a foam-rubber beach-bed and waved away the change, pay half and go firmly to sleep.

5. *Bravery.* No longer your concern. The day is over when a single cry of *au secours!* put six British swimmers in the sea as one man. Any *secours* that's wanted can be furnished by Americans—or Russians if any of them happen to be sharing your beach.

6. *Children.* Much more freedom of behaviour is possible now that there is no obligation to set an example. It is no longer a question of "What will that little French boy think!" You know what they think and you don't care.

7. *Charity.* Accept this right, left and centre. Rich Germans who offer to

drive you by Mercedes into Cannes, down to Naples, up to Valberg or somewhere may be accommodated without protest. Just lie back. Try an afternoon's actual begging some fine day.

8. *Arguments.* There is no longer any need to get into these, particularly if of a patriotic nature. Allegations of British duplicity, stupidity, snobbishness, plainness (of women), imperialism, colonialism, *crimes de cuisine* and so on may now be accepted, invited or even capped.

9. *Passports.* The bore of carrying these prominently in the hand, in order that foreign officialdom should bow down on sight, is ended at last. Sometimes, indeed, rather than admit to a British passport it may even be preferable to pretend to have lost it altogether, and claim to be Chinese—though, in that case, you should hold yourself in readiness to assume full first-class Power responsibilities all over again.



The siesta will be compulsory for City men

10. *Language.* All pretence to speak the language of the country may be abandoned. Pointing will be found adequate for most needs. This happily means that you can make a bonfire of your phrase-books, no Briton abroad will ever again wish to utter the injunction: "Tie the umbrellas together." He will have only one umbrella, and if it needs tying together (as it well may) he will do it himself.

J. B. BOOTHROYD

Historical Revision

WHAT, as the sunset throws its benign beams over us, are we going to do about our Past? It rather depends on whether we prefer our *amour propre* to looting the tourist trade. We can puff it, play it down, invent a new one in place of it, or simply avert our eyes and take flight into dreams. After all, it is still ours.

Once we find modesty is being taken at its face value, which may happen any day now, we shall have to master the art of boasting. There is no need to feel shame-faced about it. Despite the copybooks, most great men boast. A switch towards self-projection would cheer us all up, reduce the incidence of ulcers and give us a relaxed, confident gaiety that would attract the foreign pleasure-seeker. There is no reason why boasting should drive off more purposeful visitors, who might enjoy the disparity between the past we boast about and the present in which we do the boasting. As they step eagerly out of their hotels on the first morning, all pursed lips and guidebooks, they will reflect that, though the bowmen of England lopped many of their ancestors off the family tree, the Royal Tournament has to be cast from mercenaries, and they will feel a glow that makes them spend more than they can afford on buying presents.

I doubt whether there will be comparable advantages in swinging the other way and down-grading our history, altering the names of victories to the names of defeats on our street plans and turning Trafalgar Square into . . . what? That is the trouble with education. It never prepares you for a drop in status. The only generally remembered defeat is Bannockburn, and that is simply because there is no disgrace in proving inferior to the Scots. Probably the Royal Historical Society would get out a list of recognized defeats if they were asked to by the British Travel Association; but would foreigners know the names of their own victories? One just does not know how patriotically history is taught in the newer countries. We could always produce statistics about cholera and overcrowding to wipe out all that vulgar whooping over the Spinning Jenny and the two-party system and we might

give away some of our heroes, William the Conqueror to Scandinavia and France, Churchill to America, Wellington to Ireland, and Elizabeth I to Wales. The trouble is that we should never be able to do it without creating the suspicion of a catch somewhere.

Inventing a past would certainly puzzle our visitors and might outrage them. Tourists from Finland or Cambodia or Rumania would be surprised to find colonnades celebrating victories over them or even defeats inflicted by them. There could be murals of the brave old Duke of York hurling back the Flemish centre, and Ethelred cutting out the Wendish flagship. Legends would cluster round the dim laurels of newly-remembered victories. Who could ever forget the story of the little kettle-drummer and the mascot's proboscis at Korpelaager? Historians of tactics agree that if, at Slivowicz, the Earl of Beauchamp's message to the vanguard had been delivered the same day it would never have charged sideways. It was at Elvino, of course, that the regiment which later became the Pay Corps first stuck willow-herb in their casquets.

Shutting our eyes to the past might make for comfort but it would be throwing away an asset. Tourists like to feel that any town they drink and shop in has a history. We should do better to be vague about the past, while admitting that we probably had one. It might be worth while to cultivate vagueness about the score: we should know, for instance, that there had been a war but not who won it, insisting that the name of the station had been chosen because both sides fought so well at Waterloo.

It may be objected that this is all narrowly military; unhappily, peaceful glories might well bore foreigners as much as they do natives, apart from the kind of foreigner who has expert knowledge that his homeland really got there first and enjoys gibbering about it. The advantage of leaning heavily on peaceful





There will be an increase of espionage in pubs

glories is that they keep their rating though our sun goes down. Shakespeare remains just as good whatever the square acreage of the British Colonies, at least one hopes so; it would be terrible to find that it was really British arms that carried Portia and Falstaff into the hearts of the world or, for that matter, Tiny Tim and Dr. Watson. On the other hand, peaceful glories are even less easy to give away, either to foreign countries on the upswing or to the immigrants who are rapidly altering the composition of the British population and therefore, though all the implications of this escape me, the British part.

The more one peers into the mists and quicksands that lie ahead, the more likely it seems that the only safe course is to concentrate on aspects of the past that appeal to everyone. The dungeons

in the Tower of London may annoy the Scots, the pikes the descendants of foes once prodded with them, the 'Traitors' Gate citizens of countries which employed the traitors; but the rack and the thumb-screws and the horrors, the ghosts and the gibbets unite the world.

R. G. G. PRICE



SECOND-CLASS STATUS: SOME URGENT DESIDERATA

FOLK-ART of all kinds has a pleasantly second-class air. Looms should be brought to cottage doors, old men should plait osiers in full view of the traffic, and smithies must have wide open doors. In this connection, the wearing of national costume will be obligatory.

The shooting of thrushes is to be encouraged, and all fishing-rods are to be thirty feet long. Indifference to the welfare of birds and animals is, in general, important.

All assumptions of uniqueness are arrogant and must be discontinued. Meridian 0 must go. Greenwich Mean Time has an ugly ring. The Rugby Union must insert the word English. *The Times* is to be re-titled *The London Times*. Stamps must bear the words "British Postage," and the use of such terms as "Mecca" for Lord's, Wimbledon, Twickenham, etc., must be sternly discouraged.

A limited number of millionaires of a rather mysterious kind are permissible. They should be seen in casinos abroad rather than in such home gambling resorts as Bournemouth and Weston-super-Mare, and ought to enter horses for the Kentucky Derby.

The riding of bicycles by royalty should be introduced gradually, in an unobtrusive way.

Rioting by students at Universities is already well under way, but there is still too much namby-pambyism. The use of stones and tear-gas by the respective sides is overdue, as is the shouting of irredentist cries. One or two professors must be killed.

There are still far too few ex-Prime Ministers. Governments must change repeatedly, and there must be a new spirit of reluctance to assume responsibility. The formation of parties pledged to make the constitution unworkable will help.

Oil must be discovered in enormous quantities, except between the hours of twelve and four, which will be observed as siesta time, the World Football Cup must be won, the decimal system must be introduced, and vast numbers of torn three-penny and sixpenny notes must be put into circulation. Cheroots must be smoked instead of pipes, which are ineradicably imperialist, long thin noses must be reshaped and almost everybody must use the rank of colonel or count, to make both the Army and the Aristocracy look ridiculous.

Women must be treated with exaggerated respect, until married. After that they can carry huge water-pots on their heads for all any of us fat, rich second-class burgesses will care.

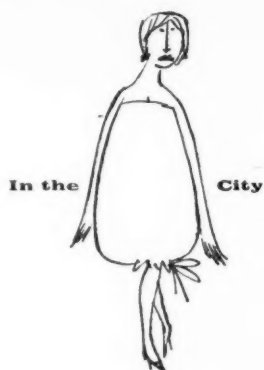
H. F. ELLIS



Learning to be a second-class power—the final stage.



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An Easter Nest-Egg

FORTUNATE the man who is called upon to lay the basis of an investment fund at this time. Not for twenty-five years have the prices of ordinary shares been as deflated as they are now; not for thirty-five years or more have sound fixed-interest securities offered such generous yields. To fill his cup brim-full there is the fact that we seem to be at the end of a long period of inflation. With growing public awareness of that enemy, there is a better chance that our political masters will be compelled to steer a course a little nearer to honest money than they have done in recent years. How far they have diverged from that course may be illustrated by one example. Mr. Dalton, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, issued his 2½ per cent irredeemables in 1947 at the price of £100. They are now worth £47½. That £47½, adjusted to the fall in the value of the pound, would now be worth £30½ in terms of 1947 prices. It follows that the investor who put his money and faith in British Government credit eleven years ago has lost more than two-thirds of his capital. If this is gilt-edged it should be spelt "guilt."

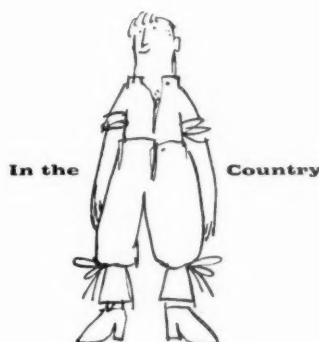
Dangers always lurk on the investment front. By 1960 we may once again be in Socialist Britain. The United States recession may recede still further and then Washington may compensate for its tardiness in getting remedial measures in train by overdoing the corrective and sending the inflation fever chart soaring again. The Middle East could play havoc once again with our oil supplies or demand bigger slices of the oil cake than it is getting to-day.

Many of these perils are appropriately discounted in the prices of shares. In fact the collective judgment of thousands of investors tends to err on the side of pessimism when things look black, just as it errs on the side of optimism in times of boom. Those of us who hold

securities acquired at higher prices and are invested right up to the bank overdraft hilt can only contemplate present opportunities in the City columns with acute envy. But imagine the fortunate fellow who has inherited a modest £2,000, or has that amount paid to him out of a maturing endowment policy. He has cash—a precious scarce commodity to-day. How shall he invest it?

An easy solution would be to put the lot into three or four of the best unit trusts. It would be an admirable solution but may not satisfy the man who wants to do his own investing—the man who will pit his judgment against that of the professional expert.

The field is wide open. The safety-first fellow to whom income does not matter very much can put it in medium-term Government securities, get a running yield of over 4 per cent and in addition a tax-free capital profit on redemption. For example 3 per cent Savings Bonds can now be bought to yield 4½ per cent plus a capital bonus of thirty points that will accrue over the next eight to eighteen years. This is not bad going and a long way from Mr. Dalton's terms.



No Free Masons Now

LIKE many people who have been living in the backwoods for the last thirty years I am feeling most frustrated. I display all the symptoms of a chronic inhibition in triplicate. My friends first noticed some derangement in my behaviour when I took to fondling a small trowel which I carry around in my pocket. I could not be parted from this symbol even when dining out. Whereas my neighbours are content to fidget with pipes and tobacco pouches after a meal, I am in the habit of producing a builder's level which I clutch in preference to a Havana. But since we are all eccentric in the country, nobody was particularly alarmed at my growing obsession with building, even when I took to shovelling

The most absurdly high yields on the Stock Exchange List are those given by steel shares. John Summers, for example, yield over 12 per cent. This reflects fears of renationalization, not in a true but in a grossly distorted mirror. Shell Transport shares, depressed by the recent issue, are cheap. Babcock & Wilcox and Leyland Motors are doing such good business in the export markets that the competitive qualities of these two companies can be taken for granted. I.C.I. still have to reap the benefit of the immense capital development financed out of profits in recent years. Unilever are a worthy representative of the food industry and of household necessities, the demand for which will hold in any foreseeable circumstances. Add for good measure Legal & General and English Electric and here are eight ordinary shares yielding on the average 6 per cent which can be placed with reasonable confidence in any Easter Egg-nest. If they have not hatched into something appreciably bigger and finer in two or three years' time there is something seriously wrong with the prospect as viewed from

LOMBARD LANE

* * *

my food around on the plate, mixing and patting it as if it were cement.

I can remember the days before the Town and Country Planning committees were formed, when a man had as much right to fling a wing, or an odd annexe, on to his house as he had to embrace his own wife. With deep nostalgia I recall the times when I used to have a sudden urge to add a couple of rooms, or a new bathroom somewhere, and within twelve hours had men there, bashing out old walls, and blazoning new windows. I used to keep a barn filled with building materials: w.c. pans that might come in handy somewhere; windows bought second-hand at sales.

But here I sit now, sadly fingering a volume of the local by-laws. It is an inch thick. It contains a thousand clauses. My architect admits he cannot understand a tenth of them. The whole wretched tome is enough to discourage the most inveterate Improver from even adding a doorknocker, let alone daring to install something so utterly frivolous as a water closet. Morosely I put my trowel and level back in my pocket again.

But my friends, seeing the gleam in my eye, suspect that one day I shall break out and commit some dreadful Folly or Pavilion down in the woods. I admit it is possible. My plan is to have no plan.

RONALD DUNCAN

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT

PLENTY of goings-on this week. It started off on Monday with Mr. Dodds' complaint that his potatoes tasted of mothballs. Members found that very funny—as indeed it was, but not half so funny as Colonel Bromley-Davenport's case of a man who had been charged £999,999 19s. 11d. for gas by the automatic computer when he had not used any gas at all; and, when the House got on to the Orders for the Day and the health charges, Mr. Walker-Smith had some good clean fun in recalling the past differences between Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Bevan on this issue. Mr. Bevan took it all in good part. Tuesday back to Nabarro. Why should piggy banks pay 30 per cent purchase tax if you put your money in them and only 15 per cent if you put in your razor-blades? Why should sugar candle-holders mounted on a wedding cake pay tax? Or don't they? Mr. Nabarro was at it again on Wednesday on the adjournment, and Mr. Simon, who seems to hold the onerous post of Under-Secretary of State for Nabarran Affairs, was up to answer him. He did it very well. There is no one who can be more confidently counted on for a good joke than Mr. Simon. It is not the least of Mr. Nabarro's services to public life that he so often causes him to make one.

A number of lady Members, led by Miss Jennie Lee, far from welcoming the proposed admission of ladies to the Lords, joined hands with Lord Glasgow

in deploring it—on the ground, roughly, that the House of Lords was such a lousy place that no woman should be seen in it; but Mrs. Braddock, in spite of her colleagues, would have none of this. If there was to be a Lords, she thought, then there should be a Ladies, too. She roundly denounced the amendment as nonsense and stumped off.

But perhaps of all the week's jokes the oddest was that perpetrated by the Lord Advocate. I drifted into the House on Wednesday afternoon for the Report Stage of the Land Drainage (Scotland) Bill. It did not sound very thrilling, but you never know your luck. I found myself let in for an apparently interminable speech from the Lord Advocate to amend "The Minister may order" to "The Minister shall have power to order." On and on it went. Nothing apparently could exceed his interest in this absorbing issue or stop the flow of his remorseless eloquence.

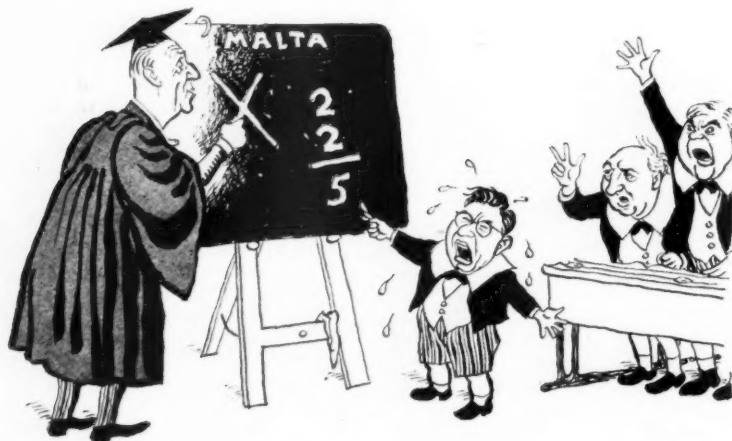
I spent most of Tuesday afternoon dodging between the Lords and the Commons. The Commons were on Mr. Mintoff, the Lords on James II. The point about a statue is that it should be a good statue, and if it is a good statue then it should be in the place where it can best be seen. The accident that you may dislike James II is no more a reason for not looking at his statue than would be the accident that you do not care for a nightingale a reason for not reading Keats. If all the



Mr. Callaghan

statues are to be moved round in a sort of Redistribution of Pedestals at each general election of historical taste, where should we be? Everybody, it seems, to-day wants to scrap the British Navy except only Mr. Mintoff, who wants to keep it alive so as to give work to Maltese dockhands in repairing it. The same principle which would substitute Raleigh for James II in one part of Trafalgar Square would equally well substitute Mr. Mintoff for Lord Nelson in another part. Perhaps we shall live to see that happen. The Socialist leaders—Mr. Callaghan, Mr. Bevan and Mr. Griffiths—were not quite sure of their stroke about Mr. Mintoff. They want integration and they are glad enough to rag Mr. Lennox-Boyd. But when first enthusiasms simmer down they know that they cannot really blame Mr. Lennox-Boyd for the present breakdown, and they know that, far from being an enemy of integration, it is only he who has prevented the growth of a much more vocal opposition to it within the Conservative Party.

By Thursday the House had run out of jokes, and a bill to say that seats should not be redistributed for some time was not sufficient to keep many Members other than Mr. Chuter Ede and the Attorney-General in the Chamber. In general it was a day more for the arts than for politics. Some Members were off at the T.U.C. Headquarters to watch the unveiling of Epstein's statue—"Nye Bevan nursing Hugh Gaitskell," Sir Tom O'Brien is rumoured to have christened it. Others, who preferred their art more certainly living, crowded into an unwired committee room to hear Anna Neagle, Dirk Bogarde, Michael Redgrave, Sir Michael Balcon and others plead against the entertainments tax. PERCY SOMERSET



Mr. Lennox-Boyd

Mr. Mintoff Mr. Griffiths Mr. Bevan



BOOKING OFFICE

Russian Relations

The Brothers Karamazov. Fyodor Dostoevsky. A new translation by David Magarshack. 2 vols. Penguin, 6/- each.

IT has always been my contention that if the Foreign Office and the State Department want to know what the Russians are like they would be far better occupied in reading the novels of Dostoevsky than in studying any official document, or accumulation of the same, ever written. Candidates should be made to write an essay comparing and contrasting Mr. Khrushchev with old Karamazov. That would be a good rough-and-ready way of assessing a young man's diplomatic abilities. It might also shed some light on Soviet foreign policy.

Mr. David Magarshack's translations have revolutionized the reading of Dostoevsky in English. *The Devils* (sometimes called *The Possessed*) and *The Idiot* appeared in Penguin editions during the past few years; now we have *The Brothers Karamazov* in two volumes. Like its predecessors, this latest addition is absolutely first rate in its combined smoothness and vitality of language. The dialogue is particularly good, and in all these works Dostoevsky is revealed in an aspect formerly veiled in his English translations; that is to say as a great comic writer. The speed and state of excitement in which he composed his novels resulted inevitably in those faults of style for which he was taken to task by Russian critics. It is impossible to conceal these faults, but Mr. Magarshack very considerably irons them out.

The Brothers Karamazov is generally regarded as Dostoevsky's greatest novel. He himself had a weakness (which I to some extent share) for *The Idiot*, but it is probably true to say that the former book, only finished in October, 1881, about three months before its author's death, is the greater *tour de force*. In it ideas patter out like the rattle of machine-guns, while every action is thrown into strong relief by

the violence and reckless behaviour of its characters, acting—as one does not for one moment doubt—in a completely characteristic manner.

Take, for example, the incident where Dmitry Karamazov discovers that his commanding officer has embezzled the regimental funds and is on the point of being put under arrest. Dmitry sends a message to the effect that if Katerina, the Colonel's haughty and beautiful daughter (whom Dmitry, although a great ladies' man, has formerly deliberately ignored) will come to his lodging alone he will give her the money—a matter of several hundred pounds which, as luck would have it, Dmitry has just extracted from his father.

The implication is obvious. Katerina decides to save her father and goes

to Dmitry's room. Dmitry is at first overwhelmed with a sadistic desire to tell the girl she is not worth more than half, or perhaps three quarters, of the sum in question. Then he changes his mind and hands her a promissory note for rather more than the required amount, bidding her a bow of farewell.

Katerina, overcome, falls on her knees and places her forehead on the ground. Then she leaves. Dmitry draws his sword and for a moment contemplates stabbing himself; then he changes his mind and kisses the sword. A short time later he receives a letter from Katerina saying that she has fallen madly in love with him . . .

Now all this, as presented, is completely credible; but try putting it into English—or even French—terms while still retaining some degree of naturalism. I think it must be admitted to be impossible at any historical period. At one moment or another the situation would have taken a different turn. It is worth considering the different form that Dostoevsky's genius would have possessed had he been writing of the inhabitants of Western Europe—the ways of which, of course, he deeply hated.

With all the teeming evil of most of the characters is contrasted the virtue of Alyosha Karamazov, the youngest brother. In him there is much of Prince Myshkyn, "the Idiot." There are moments when Alyosha is perhaps a little too good to be true; or, to put it another way, the story is told too wholly from his point of view. All the same, whatever criticisms one may advance, the amount that Dostoevsky, eighty years ago, knew of how human life was shaping is staggering. His twin hatreds were Socialism and Roman Catholicism. With extraordinary perception he saw the true nature of the Russian revolutionaries of his own time. There was little, too, that the psychiatrists of to-day could teach him about the complication of human relationships. His philosophical gymnastics are breathtaking. On top of it all *The Brothers Karamazov* can be read as a sinister murder story in its own right.

ANTHONY POWELL

NOVEL FACES



X—COMPTON MACKENZIE

Siam's sleek cats and Scotland's cause both minister

To Monty's mood—it's long since Streets were Sinister.

The Contenders. John Wain. *Macmillan*, 13/6

Two power-lustful rivals from the Potteries, an industrialist and an artist, are observed by a fat, non-competing reporter who tells their story in a series of energetic encounters in pubs and sleek restaurants and seamy studios both in the gritty provinces and flashy London. It is a little difficult to read Mr. Wain's novels for themselves, leaving out of account his standing as a critic and poet and controversialist, and not to treat them as documents of the new derisive realism or even as Redbrick fiction, that curious branch of the novel cornered by Oxford men.

His vitality busts out all over his carefully contrived stories. He has great fertility in the invention of episode and, what is rare since Bennett, wonder. For all the knowingness, he is absorbed in life and all his characters are successful at something. Mr. Wain has not so far found the kind of story that harmonizes all his scattered gifts, that can be transfused by his humour and his poetry; but he is getting nearer to it. And at least the early novels are always fun to read.

R. G. G. P.

On the Continent. Osbert Sitwell. *Macmillan*, 12/6

Sepia-tinted portraits in verse of the inhabitants of an Italian art city between the two world wars, seen by a boy but remembered and commented on by a sophisticated elder. They make a satisfying collection, light and certain, with nostalgia well under control. Only when he steps out of his own *persona* does the poet falter; it is perhaps not to be expected that the peasant singing among the vineyards sings in quite the idiom of Sir Osbert. The interest and the conversational tone are so well sustained that it is easy to miss (as it should be) the precision of each phrase and word. The characters themselves are mostly a little ridiculous and, though lovingly dwelt on, not much sympathized with, let alone

hugged. One finishes the book feeling that one knows a good bit more now about those mad, lost, foreign colonies in Italy which Hitler put paid to. P. D.

Malone Dies. Samuel Beckett. *Calder*, 10/6

I Hear Voices. Paul Ableman. *Zimmerman: Olympia Press*, 15/-

Both these short novels are based on the dream-life of characters confined to their beds. *Malone Dies* is perhaps the most static yet of Beckett's works; in comparison *Murphy* is a sensational novelette, *Molloy* a thrilling saga of exploration, *Godot* a tense comedy-drama. It consists of the "interior monologue" of a worn-out old man on his death-bed. Reflections on his present discomforts alternate with fragments of a story he makes up to amuse himself, a story in which the hero Saposcat, alias Macmann, gradually merges with Malone himself. It takes determination to decide to read a book like this, but once begun *Malone Dies* is hard to leave; the style is compellingly readable and rich in those obstinate intimations of fun that characterize Beckett's invention even at its squallidest.

Paul Ableman's first novel pursues the delusions of a young schizophrenic. One would have to be a psychiatrist, or a schizophrenic, to say if they are true to life; at any rate the fluctuating tissue of fantasy is sustained with much imaginative power, though from time to time it falls to the level of conscious invention. The question is whether, save as an exercise, it was worth doing at all without trying to extract some concrete principle, or theme, or moral, out of the delirium. *I Hear Voices* ends exactly where it begins and offers no more than a concerto would which consisted only of cadenzas.

B. A. Y.

Parkinson's Law, or The Pursuit of Progress. C. Northcote Parkinson. *John Murray*, 12/6

Tycoons and senior Civil Servants may well tremble when they read—as secretly they will have to—this deadly analysis of managerial humbug in modern society. Splendidly disrespectful and uncomfortably well informed, it is a book to make the ordinary down-trodden citizen hug himself with pleasure. Professor Parkinson is sometimes near Gamesmanship but yet seems to have invented a new branch of political science in his own right. Starting with the simple rule that "work expands to fill the time available for its completion," he goes on to explain the defence systems thrown out by mediocrity at the top, the serpentine tactics of professional committee-men, and the extraordinary history of candidate-selection in Britain.

In this very funny demolition of the man with four telephones the Professor slips up only in his addiction to such old-fashioned pseudonyms as "Darndreeryland." Alarmingly good sense bubbles

up through all his mock-scientific nonsense, and Osbert Lancaster parades its victims objectively. E. O. D. K.

Young People. William Cooper. *Macmillan*, 16/-

Mr. William Cooper is an unassuming novelist who has established himself in the purlieus of Sir Charles Snow and Mr. Kingsley Amis. He has not the wit of the latter nor the intellectual force of the former, but his best novel, *Scenes from Provincial Life*, had a lyrical charm of its own. His new book, *Young People*, carries a minor echo of that charm but shows no development of his art and no extension of his imaginative field.

We are introduced to a group of provincial students who are, we feel, so familiar to the author that he mistakenly presents them as though they are already familiar to the reader. The result is that through the leisurely process of the book only the chief male character, the fraudulent Leo, achieves a separate existence. Mr. Cooper takes more pains with his women-folk. The girl who marries Leo, and Mrs. Gunning, the "mother figure" of the group, are the best things in the book. Despite the fact that *Young People* makes pleasant enough reading, its general effect is a trifle thin. O. M.

After the Rain. John Bowen. *Faber*, 15/-

Mr. Bowen's fable begins with an invention for rain-making. (I could not quite follow his rather casual description, but it seemed to assume that air is hydrogen and oxygen.) A flood is caused and, after some vivid ingenuities about its earlier effects, Mr. Bowen assembles an assortment of characters on a raft under the leadership of a chartered accountant, who saves them but makes them accept him as a god. Like an Anatole France who has read William Golding, Mr. Bowen leans to wit and elegance but is aware of terror. I found the tale as readable as its predecessor, *The Truth Will Not Help Us*, and happier in its mechanics.

In the past the men who have provided plans and will-power in crises have often been bookish or arty, like Lawrence of Arabia and Wingate, or Hitler for that matter. Mr. Bowen shows the contemporary type of leader emergent, the chartered accountant who substitutes system for intuition but reveals the same kind of frenzy as the leaders he replaces.

R. G. G. P.

AT THE PLAY

Gentlemen's Pastime (PLAYERS')

The Catalyst (ARTS)

Breath of Spring (CAMBRIDGE)

MISS MARION HART, who wrote the book, music and lyrics of *Gentlemen's Pastime*, gives the impression of having been filling a hat with random ideas for some time and



"No, I've never really hoped for much from the Budget since Jim Thomas's day."

now taking out a large handful and strewing them over the Player's Theatre stage. The lyrics, though limping, are better than the book, which positively staggers; a lot of the music is tuneful and neat, a little of it quite captivating. Perhaps versatility is the trouble, and Miss Hart should be content with composing only. Critics have fallen over themselves to discern a parallel between Professor Abercrombie, of this work, who for some reason unexplained picks up sneak-thieves and converts them into gentleman crooks, and Professor Higgins of the well-known Shaw musical, *My Fair Lady*, a dedicated dialectologist; this shows how hard put to it they were to find any approach to the thing at all. There is none. Formlessness defeats analysis. The evening came near to being saved once or twice by high standards of performance. Despite modern dress-shapes which tried hard to

REP SELECTION

Canterbury, *The Prisoner*, to April 5th.
Dundee, *The Little Hut*, to April 5th.
Liverpool, *The Philanderer*, to April 12th.
Northampton, *The Perfect Woman* (with Frankie Howerd), to April 5th.

defeat her Miss Judith Whitaker made an appealing heroine; Miss Janet Hamilton-Smith sang like a well-trained angel; and Miss Joan Manning, as an Irish maiden straight from home with barely a trace of accent, sparkled attractively.

Miss Virginia Maskell is perhaps the best reason for going to see *The Catalyst* at the Arts. She is a very lovely brunette who, even more than Miss Renée Asherson and considerably more than Mr. Phil Brown (the three are the whole cast), occasionally brings Mr. Ronald Duncan's uncomfortable play to life. In brief, Mr. Brown is a doctor whose wife and secretary are both mad about him, and who resent his being mad about both of them, until they find out that they are really mad about each other, but *through* him, so to speak, just as he is only mad about the wife through the secretary and the secretary through the wife (but you should hear Mr. Duncan tell it). In case geometry might help, this could be described as a triangle with rounded corners, making a circle whose mild viciousness caused the Lord Chamberlain to forbid other than Club Theatre performances. For a "modern comedy," as the programme describes it, the play's dialogue creaks oddly. Do the moderns fling "pompous prig" and "you dirty, double-crossing —!" at each other? "How like a man!" says one of the female besotted. Nor is the philosophy strikingly *avant-garde*. "Can't you see that the only thing worth living for



[Breath of Spring

Dame Beatrice Appleby—ATHENE SEYLER

Brigadier Brain—MICHAEL SHEPLEY

is——?" "What?" "Being alive" . . . "London can be the loneliest place in the world." On the other hand, the word bloody occurs daringly several times, and some nobility is lent to the tender scenes by abandoning don't, isn't and can't for the more significant do not, is not and cannot. But perhaps the evening's greatest puzzle is Mr. Phil Brown's hold over the two ladies. True, he has an American accent (not explained), but he is a man shaggy and withdrawn, in a hunched suit whose trousers seem too long and wide for a modern comedy. His amatory triumphs, of ambitious proportions in the script, seem quite unbelievable. A lesser but teasing mystery is why a lull in the action in Act Two should be covered by a gramophone record of "Basin Street Blues."

No doubt the immoderate first-night laughter which greeted *Breath of Spring* has diminished by now, and the cast can speak three consecutive words without freezing in their tracks while the echoes settle. Later audiences, lent discrimination by having paid for their seats, will not think the evening as funny as that, though at times it is very funny indeed. Granted that Mr. Peter Coke has hit on a pleasant little farcical plot, and contrives to stretch it to three acts without its actually tearing, it is Mr. Michael Shepley and five assorted ladies who are really responsible for the fun. As a party of late middle-agers, immured in the well-bred paying-guest house of

Miss Athene Seyler, who find that robbing for charity lends zest to a lack-lustre existence, they strike a clear note of amiable artificiality from the first; it is their skill which persuades us to accept the outrageous premise and, having accepted, to follow the action's argument with indulgence. The detail of the humour is not remarkable. A mention of senna pods, for example, is judged (and rightly) to be good for prolonged mirth. But Miss Seyler's Dame Beatrice is so adorable—could anyone else, confronted with the meagre fruits of a fur robbery, make the same wild music of the one word "Mole!"?—Mr. Shepley's brigadier so dedicated, and the elocution teacher of Miss Hazel Hughes so sheep-doggy and flat-heeled, that we throw our self-respect to the winds and surrender under a barrage of sheer technique. But it is to be feared that this will seem a very different play by the time it reaches the amateur stage. For the benefit of those who are interested in play-titling practice, "Breath of Spring" is neither a theme-song nor a seasonal pointer, but a mink stole.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Three conversational necessities of the moment: *Flowering Cherry* (Haymarket—27/11/57), *The Potting Shed* (Globe—12/2/58), *A Touch of the Sun* (Saville—12/2/58). For light relief Norman Wisdom's *Where's Charley?* (Palace—26/2/58) or *Roar Like a Dove* (Phoenix—2/10/57). J. B. BOOTHROYD

AT THE BALLET

Miracle in the Gorbals
The Sleeping Beauty
 (COVENT GARDEN)

DANCE-DRAMA is enjoying a revival in the Royal Ballet as a result of the return of Robert Helpmann as a guest artist. After seeing him again in Ninette de Valois's Hogarthian masterpiece, *The Rake's Progress*, it was no surprise to find that his own *Miracle in the Gorbals* has lost none of its spell-binding power. A morality-mime in which the central figure, a mysterious Stranger, raises a young suicide from death and thus excites the lethal antagonism of the sombre-liveried Official is strong meat for the ballet-theatre. When, in addition, it is invested with such a wealth of realistic detail as to leave little opportunity for dancing, the success of the revival after fourteen years is impressive.

An audience largely composed of ballet-lovers to whom the work was virtually new gave it a resounding welcome. Helpmann as choreographer had been fortunate in his experienced collaborators. First there was Michael Benthall's clearly articulated scenario, then Arthur Bliss's firmly phrased score and Edward Burra's scenery and costumes which touched the squalid dockland with brooding evil and with mystery.

It may well be asked, why pick on an actual city, Glasgow, and an actual quarter, for a story of universal relevance? There is nothing peculiarly Glaswegian in this echoing of incidents in the Crucifixion narrative.

Helpmann's bearing, make-up and gestures all bespeak a master of mime. As the Stranger he projects saintly character by methods in which restraint is paramount. With none but the slightest changes of facial expression and with grave economy of gesture he dominates the scene. It is a brilliant feat. The episode in which at the instigation of the jealous Official the miracle-working Stranger is set upon and murdered by Clydeside toughs is saved from becoming mere melodrama by the unobtrusive balletic movements of the heterogeneous crowd.

Annette Page's touching performance as the young Suicide does not efface memories of Pauline Clayden's exquisite fragility in the part, but it adds something memorably different. Julia Farron is a striking new-comer to the part of the Prostitute and Leslie Edwards admirably repeats his original creation of a Beggar, as much at home with the garbage-cans as with his fiddle.

A succession of proved Auroras having appeared in turn during a week's performances of Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty*, it fell to Anya Linden at a Saturday matinée to make her Covent Garden début in the part. She fully deserved the warm and emphatic ovation which the house gave her. Hers was a

16-year-old princess bubbling with happiness but never unmindful of the dignity of her station. Linden is a gifted and finely disciplined young artist whose dancing is the mirror of a captivating personality. She was well matched in her prince, for David Blair is second to none in the company in inspiring confidence in the beholder. He evidently communicated it also to his Aurora for their combination progressed lyrically to a brilliant culmination in the final *pas de deux*.

C. B. MORTLOCK

AT THE PICTURES

Dunkirk—Peyton Place
Gideon's Day

SORRY, but I can't say anything helpful about *Dunkirk* (Director: Leslie Norman). I believe that the popular assumption that it must be absolutely wonderful (an assumption that was current long before the film was shown, and indeed almost as soon as most people heard the title) is due almost entirely to the power of publicity... which is the only reason, come to think of it, for my feeling called on to begin with the word "Sorry." I think the film is made without distinction in the ordinary old British way and that it is full of good actors wasted on material that gives them no chance to do any better than poor actors. You do not produce a good film merely by choosing a good subject, but (as I said the other week) I have a sad suspicion that there

are always film-makers willing to presume on the popular illusion that you do. ("We needn't take all that trouble—they'll come anyway.") In short—sorry.

I gather that the story of *Peyton Place* (Director: Mark Robson) has been cleaned up a good deal; but the film is obviously the film of a best-seller, though perhaps not exactly the one that Grace Metalious wrote. You get the feeling at once, with the credit titles: the names come on separately—"Lana Turner... as Constance, Hope Lange... as Selena, Lloyd Nolan... as Dr. Swain, Diane Varsi... as Allison" and so on, and the implication is that the cinema is full of people who are there to see a lot of old friends and will watch eagerly for the names of the actors and actresses who are to portray them.

And then (prefaced by some magnificent colour pictures of the four seasons in *Peyton Place*) comes the story, told by that familiar best-seller character, the sensitive, sweet, infinitely "understanding" young girl who always wanted to be a writer, and is now recording her memories and observations about all the rich characters among whom she grew up.

Recording them at some length: the film lasts over two and a half hours, so as to make a "wide appeal" by getting in as many characters and as many different kinds of scene as possible. The characters are all fairly obvious ("You know, the sort of person who—"), and the incidents, even the most violent ones, are



Allison—DIANE Varsi

Rodney Harrington—BARRY COE

Norman Page—RUSS TAMBLYN

not out of the (fictional) ordinary. Within those limits, the film is well done; but the fact remains that when a picture can be summarized by stringing together such brief symbols as "the rich man's son," "the school dance," "the drunk stepfather," "the Labour Day picnic" and so forth, no one with imagination can get much more from seeing it than from reading the summary.

That being said, one can compliment many of the players, notably Diane Varsi as the narrator (though not on the pretentiously literary phrases with which she sometimes has to link the scenes); the director, particularly on his handling of some crowded sequences full of entertaining detail (such as that picnic); and the director of photography, William Mellor, on many most beautiful effects.

The most unexpected thing about *Gideon's Day* (Director: John Ford) is the name of the director. Gideon (Jack Hawkins) is a Scotland Yard man, and the story of his day, though it comes from a novel, is essentially a number of episodes designed to demonstrate the job of a Chief Inspector, linked—apart from several arbitrary coincidences—only by chronological order and his narrating voice. Again, the characters are types; only once or twice (Grizelda Hervey as a bitter, angry wife, Marjorie Rhodes as a tragically shattered mother) does one get something like a whiff of reality, for there is nothing for the players to work with. The whole thing is quite entertaining, but it's ordinary—not John Ford timber. (It includes, by the way, a young policeman who deduces that a man with the *Manchester Guardian* must have just been in Manchester—and who, by not the least arbitrary of those coincidences, turns out to be right.)

* * * * *

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The big ones have arrived in London for Easter: promising newcomers include *The Quiet American*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *Bonjour Tristesse* and *Orders to Kill*. The impressive Swedish allegory *The Seventh Seal* (19/3/58) and the perfect entertainment *Around the World in Eighty Days* (17/7/57) continue.

Among the releases is *Carve Her Name With Pride* (5/3/58), which I thought disappointingly superficial, though others found it moving. A good reissue: the brightly made and enjoyable thriller *The Clouded Yellow* (6/12/50).

RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

The Playwright-Hunt

OF the plays to be seen by London viewers during the fortnight beginning with *The Clandestine Marriage* (B.B.C.) and *The One Who Came*

Back (commercial), fewer than half were written directly for television; and as a matter of fact that minority includes two—*Sammy*, a virtuoso composition for one character, one set and one situation, and *The Little Beggars*, a ballad opera which I have only included so that I can say how much I liked it—that are not strictly speaking plays at all.

This is not really a bad proportion; there ought always to be room on television for the good stage play. The question that arises is, how do they stand up, these original scripts, against the adaptations, against *The Clandestine Marriage* and *Strange Interlude* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*? Well, the answer is that they barely stand up at all. They hardly even stand up against *Background*, by Warren Chetham-Strode.

One Man Absent was a workmanlike job, consciously pitched at about the level of the Wednesday matinees on sound. *The One Who Came Back* (A.B.C.) was a preposterously contrived affair about a German bomber pilot who made a sentimental journey to the little English village on which he had dropped a bomb, and nearly got lynched for his trouble. *Flowers for the Queen* (Associated-Rediffusion) was an even more preposterous affair about a prize daffodil grown by a member of the Dutch underground during the war and smuggled out by an escaping R.A.F. sergeant. I can't speak of *My Flesh, My Blood*, as I wasn't able to see it.

Now I know it is not the fault of the drama departments that the standard of original plays is so low. The plain fact is that, for a serious playwright, writing specially for television is not worth while. A ninety-minute script involves almost as much labour as a three-act play; it is a poor reward to be handed a smallish cheque and to see the play flicker once to life and then disappear for ever (unless it happens to come in the very rare category of *Anastasia* or *Dial M for Murder*).

I am sorry to bring up Granada again so soon; people will get the idea that I am in their pay; but it is Granada who are the first to have devised a scheme to improve the situation. They are offering a prize of three thousand pounds, which is no small sum, in a competition in which the entrant must submit not one script but three. This means that the winner is embarked on a consistent course, that he has not thrown off one play to get himself a new car, but is capable of sitting down and producing scripts in quantity.

This enterprise ought to succeed. We cannot continue to surrender the television screen to the established playwrights, who occasionally allow a play to be adapted, not because the money is any attraction to them but because the publicity is. Television writing is a new art, born of our century, and it must be made clear that there is success to be got from it as a profession, not as a by-product of other activities.



I have been taken to task for suggesting that Associated-Rediffusion deliberately suppresses the credits for Granada shows in the *TV Times*. Anyone who has ever met a programme contractor face-to-face knows that this is impossible. And I am assured that the northern edition of the *TV Times* is simply bubbling over with credits for Granada, while Associated-Rediffusion and ATV remain in relative obscurity.

This seems to me equally wrong, I must confess. For good or ill, the contractors have built up personalities of their own and the discriminating listener may have a guide as to the character of a programme by considering who has put it on.

However, lest a false impression may have arisen, I hasten to correct it. The impression that should have arisen is that I would like to see credits for all shows. Then the possibility of a false impression would not exist.

Goodness, I almost forgot to mention Sir David Eccles's political broadcast. Oh, I do hope they sign him up for "Six-Five Special" now that Freddie Mills is going.

B. A. YOUNG

MARY DUNN

WE record with regret the death of Mary Dunn, who contributed many articles to *Punch* in the 'thirties and 'forties, and will be best remembered for her series about Lady Addle of Eigg.

FOR
WOMEN



Behind the Royal Scenes

QUEEN ELIZABETH the Queen Mother, accompanied by *The Princess Margaret*, was present at a Dress Show organized by the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers at Dartmouth House: a relatively simple royal occasion, just tea and a dress show.

Following many weeks of previous preparations, arrangements at Dartmouth House (the club premises of the English Speaking Union) start the day before the show. 6 a.m. flowers are delivered and florists arrive for work. Other deliveries during the day include thirty-six Minton china place settings, silver teaspoons and desert forks, tea napkins; two large silver teapots; Sheraton card-tables, Italian torchères, candelabra, two hundred gilt chairs, two eighteenth-century Neapolitan chairs, two Savonnerie and two Aubusson carpets. Dresses and dress-rails from eleven couture houses are installed in the bedrooms.

On the day itself, forty-four model girls and their dressers arrive at 9 a.m. and coffee is served to them in the bedrooms. Two hundred guests come for the Preview at 10 o'clock, after which the model girls are revived with sherry (two bottles in big bedrooms, one in small) and are ready to face the photographers. The gilt chairs are taken away and replaced with blue chairs. Everyone disperses for lunch.

They return in full chic: John Cavanagh in a blue tie with blood-red spots; Hardy Amies striking a quietly individual note with his horizontally striped navy-and-white shirt and navy tie; Miss Ann Ryan in a décolletée dress, breathtakingly short in the new manner, tellingly topped by a miniature millinery gem. Mrs. Peter Thorneycroft arrived in a white petalled toque with a red rose centre forward; and Lady Pamela Berry, President and hostess, wore dark blue silk with fashionable back interest—*le dernier cri*.

On the arrival of the royal guests about thirty people were presented. (A list of suggested names for this honour has to be submitted to Clarence House, where it is carefully scrutinized and any previous meetings recalled for conversational purposes.) The eighteenth-century Neapolitan chairs, backed by a screen of pleated yellow muslin which was topped by ostrich plumes and flanked by flowers, now received their royal occupants. A modest chair between them was taken in turn by each of the eleven designers as his five models were shown. For tea, the sixty guests were divided. Those who had not been presented were in one room, those who had in another—and during tea these were moved around so that each was at one of the royal tables for a short time.



Career Girl: 5 — Manual Labour

THE muscles of female crane-drivers and window-cleaners would look odd in the limbs of Velasquez's Venus.

On the other hand the crane-drivers and window-cleaners might easily outshine Velasquez's Venus at beating the panel on "What's My Line?"

In the bedrooms the fifty-five models and dressers had tea and got ready to go in an Associated-Rediffusion bus for televising; they would be there until eleven o'clock that night.

No sooner had the royal guests stepped into their car than the red carpet was taken from the doorway and men in brown overalls were upstairs rolling up the Aubussons and Savonneries. Women in white overalls were carefully packing away the flowers (to bloom another day elsewhere?); others packed the Minton and the silver, stacked the red chairs. In less than half an hour all was gone. Wandering around in the shifting scene, the hosts and organizers were like the survivors of a wedding: adrift, but happy and talkative. They told each other that it went off very well, and that They really seemed to have enjoyed themselves. And it is possible that They had.

ALISON ADBURGHAM

Problem Corner

Q. I wonder if you can help me? I eloped in nothing but the Dior dress I stood up in because my parents did not approve of my marrying a local boy. We are married now (after many vicissitudes) and are very, very happy, although living abroad. My problem is—What shall we do now?

A. My dear, there is only one thing for you to do now. Take up the hem of your Dior dress to the fashionable seventeen inches as it is vital to keep up British prestige in foreign parts, and now that you have secured your husband it is important not to "let yourself go."

Q. I am very interested in charity and you might almost call me a social worker. It is part of my creed to cheer up the poor by wearing my wild mink and my Mirman hats when I go

slumming. Also I am an active member of the local Council and take part in B.B.C. discussion programmes. My mother has all my interests and in addition is a famous novelist and expert on women's psychology. Our difficulty is this. My husband does not seem to join in things, although my mother continually tells him that he will only get out of life what he puts into it.

A. It sounds to me as if you and your mother have been very patient. I expect you have already tried to cure him with malted milk drinks, so here is another suggestion. Try to interest yourself in his little doings. Where does he spend his time, for example? What work does he do? Where does his money come from? Who is he? I should be so interested to hear the answers.

Q. My baby girl, aged five months, seems to have a persecution complex. In spite of inoculation she has developed an allergy to newspaper reporters. She is also becoming a little disobedient and refuses to practise her Oriental mysticism exercises.

A. Perhaps your baby is being persecuted. Ask her. She is a little young for advanced studies in Oriental mysticism, but try planting the idea in her mind that newspaper reporters are merely an hallucination.

Q. I have a passion for such stones as amethyst, zircon, moonstone, topaz and garnets, but my husband will keep coming in with those big, vulgar diamonds. I have almost come to dread Saturday when he draws his money for the week. What should I do? He is an irritable man when roused, and will pick a quarrel with me anywhere in public.

A. I am afraid you are being very selfish. The essential of any happy marriage (as you should know with your experience) is give-and-take, and there are times when it is kinder to deceive one's partner for his own happiness. Accept the diamonds and try to look pleased.

MONICA FURLONG

"Actress Margaret Whiting, who got a drubbing from the critics because her interpretation of Cleopatra was not sexy enough, is making a come-back—as a street-walker in Eugene O'Neill's marathon play 'The Ice Man Cometh.'"—*News Chronicle*

No discouraging her.

Time Was

TIME was (or so I read in *Etiquette, Politeness, and Good Breeding*, 1870), "when private gentlewomen rarely, if ever, walked in the streets unattended by a footman; but times are changed."

To-day there's not a private gentlewoman let alone a footman. Pram-wheeling nannies are extinct, except in Kensington Gardens. And not even the Topmost People toy with the thought of a travelling servant speaking French, Italian and Spanish.

But oh, what a multitude waited upon you fifty years ago! Every species of servant, from an English chef (job not objected to) to a chauffeur-coachman (R.A.C. certificate and abstainer), offered his services in the columns of *The Times*. You could find a chauffeur-valet for any petrol car, or a coachman (two years a second coachman in a nobleman's family). You could acquire a carriage- or motor-groom, an upper housemaid (Baptist and abstainer) for £30 a year; you could select a kitchen-maid (with scullerymaid or second under-chef) for £26. You could secure a Very Good Plain Cook (no beer, early riser) for £30; and shorthand writers and typists, male and female, would flock to attend you, with or without machines, for 4s. per day inclusive.

Admirers of Anthony Hope might engage an Austrian valet, speaking German, Italian and English (10 years' reference with German Count). And those who cultivated their cabbages at Tranby Croft could acquire a Gardener (Head Working), thoroughly experienced in vines, peaches, melons, orchids, plant and, of course, carnation houses.

Oh for the days when your hair was dressed for you, your dresses made, your boas packed, your Ouida read to you, your correspondence written, your piano played, your philanthropic work performed by proxy by the Daughter of a Colonel in the Army...

But it's no use crying over spilt champagne. I must go and make my char a cup of tea.

JOANNA RICHARDSON

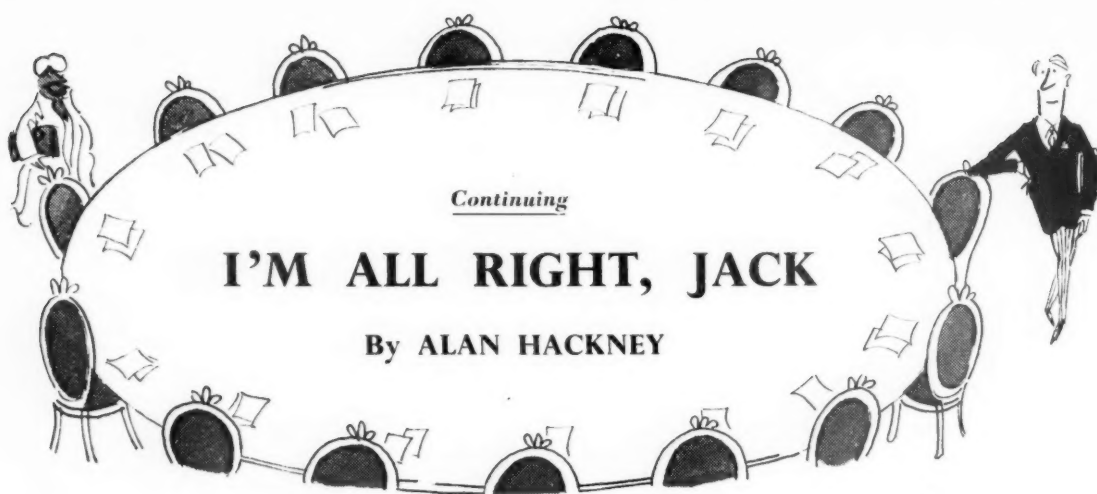
Pin-Cushion Note

I cook not for mine own delight
I wash not up for pleasure
So I've gone out to dine to-night—
I'll cook not for your sole delight—
Of hearth and home I hate the sight
Till I have found a Treasure,
Who'll cook the meals for our delight
And wash things up with pleasure.

M. V. A. A.



"George is taking me to Paris for the spring cleaning."



Continuing

I'M ALL RIGHT, JACK

By ALAN HACKNEY

Stanley Windrush has secured an appointment at the Foreign Office on the strength of his knowledge of Japanese. Windrush is staying with his aunts in Eaton Square.

"YOUR Branch Under-Secretary isn't in the office at the moment," said the official. "He's temporarily abroad. So for the time being you'll be put to help out Mr. Hardy-Freeman. I'll get a messenger to show you."

The messenger led him up and down staircases and long corridors. After asking in one of the messengers' rooms he finally established where Mr. Hardy-Freeman's room was, and they found it at last up a neglected-looking flight of stairs.

"Come along in," said Hardy-Freeman. "They rang up to say you were coming. My name's Wallace Hardy-Freeman, as you gather."

"I'm Stanley Windrush. I got the impression nobody quite knew where you were."

"Yes, I dare say. I shouldn't really be here at all. Isn't this an appalling place?"

"I don't know yet. Is it?"

"Fantastic. I shouldn't stay, my dear fellow. I've been in Bangkok most of my time. But there was a bit of a mix-up out there and I was recalled here."

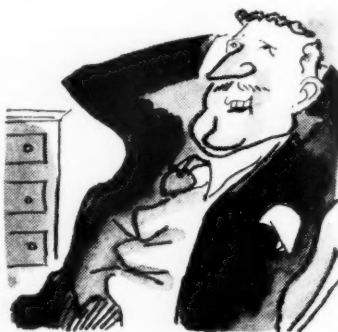
"I see. Well, what do we do?"

"Well, frankly, there is a *frightful* lot to do. We do a lot of analysing reports from foreign parts, you know. God, it's tedious. Not like abroad. Have you any specialities?"

"Japanese, I suppose."

"That's good to hear," said Wallace. He selected three thick bundles from his middle tray. "They're making a précis of these for the Board of Trade. Just up your street."

"Oh?" said Stanley. "What are they?"



Wallace Hardy-Freeman

"Reports on Japanese shirt production. An interminable question. Incidentally, they'll probably put you down for duty officer straight away. All you do for that is look at everything that comes in and ring people in the early hours, but I shouldn't advise that much."

"I suppose not."

"Well, there you are. I've got to rush about like a bee on heat now," he added,

opening a file in a leisurely fashion. "Got a Parliamentary Question to sort out for to-morrow."

No messages came in at all for the duty officer until half past three, when Stanley, nodding over *The Tatler*, was presented with a telegram.

RAK 2245

THREE INCIDENTS LAST NIGHT AGYPTIAN-SOLOMONIAN BORDER LOCAL SOURCE CONSIDERS HIGHLY PROBABLE PUT-UP JOB BUT AS MAHOMMED NOW IN U.K. PRESUMABLY NEGOTIATING ARMS SUPPLY AND EMMANUEL LIKEWISE ABSENT TENSION REMAINS SAME LEVEL MAHOMMED'S NATURE BOYS DRILLING WITH STICKS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY TODAY

MCLOUGHLIN

Stanley rang up Wallace. The telephone rang for a long time before there was any reply. Finally a voice said "Yerm?"

"That you, Wallace? Stanley."

"Oh God. What?"

"I've just got a telegram in. It says—"

"Don't read it to me over the telephone, idiot. Is it urgent?"

"I think it must be. What shall I do about it?"

Wallace made the peculiar noise of a man frustrated.

"Ring someone sensible," he said in a strained voice. "Ring the Minister of State if you like, but not me."

There was a click.

Stanley picked up the other telephone and dutifully rang the Minister of State.

"Well?"

"Urgent telegram, sir?"

"I should damn well think so. Who's dropped the Bomb?"

"No one, sir. This is what it says." Stanley began reading.

There was silence when he finished.

"Thank you very much indeed," said the voice finally. "Now why don't you go and boil your fat head?"

"Hullo, is that Mr. Brimpton?"

"Bloody lucky for you it isn't. I'm Julian Briggs, the P.A. And who are you? Windrush? Well, I'll do the same for you some time, I hope."

MY DEAR STANLEY (wrote his father), I enclose one or two letters sent to you at this address. (Stanley was unable to find these.)

The annual congress of Natural Union ended this week, and a most interesting affair it was. Delegates came from most of the civilized countries of the world (very few from the Eastern bloc, unfortunately) and we had a number of interesting discussions. There was a particularly charming man, a Mr. Mahommed, who is one of the delegates in the Agyptian mission to London for the forthcoming Coloured Conference. We had a number of little chats and it was stimulating to learn that whereas his government's policy in recent years has had the avowed aim of clothing the coloured peasantry in Western style, the really progressive opinion in his country is turning more and more (with emancipation) to the way of naturism.

Mr. Mahommed was delighted to hear that I had a son at the Foreign Office and expressed the hope that he would be able to meet you during the conference.

The weather prophets, on the whole, forecast a fine autumn. Let's hope they're right.

Your affectionate
FATHER

The much-publicized Coloured Conference had originally been a scheme to bring to London as many eminent black, brown and yellow men as possible, in order to feel the way towards some method of increasing waning British influence in the world, and promoting trading arrangements which did not involve lending any money.

At first it had been going to include representatives from the British Colonies, who, it was hoped, would be able to convince the coloured foreigners what a good thing it was to trade with the Old Country. The affair was then to have been run jointly by the Foreign and Colonial Offices. There had been, however, some reluctance by certain

states to come on this inferior footing, and friction had arisen between the two Departments.

Eventually, the idea of including the Colonials was dropped and only the non-British coloured men invited. A large number of these were coming, mostly for the ride, and visits for them had been arranged, after the early meetings of the conference, to academic and industrial centres.

Plantagenet House, a nobleman's former town residence sold very profitably to the nation, and now the scene for international consultations in an ostentatious mood, was all a-bustle with preparations for the conference, and presently, with the airborne arrivals of delegations filling the television newsreels, the conference began.

Wallace, on duty in a confidential messenger-boy role, almost forgot his yearning for Bangkok in the unaccustomed glamour of the proceedings, but on the evening of the ninth day, when the expensive conference was

"Bad luck. However, Wallace has broken his leg. You're to stand in for him to-day. Thought I'd give you as much notice as possible."

The exact point at which the deterioration set in at the conference is uncertain, but the appearance of Stanley Windrush at Plantagenet House, in the entourage of the British Foreign Secretary, may well have struck the first discordant note.

Just before ten o'clock Stanley stood about despondently outside the great conference room. Despite the urgency of his summons there seemed little likelihood of there being anything much to do, and the lump on his forehead smarted. A photographer's flash lit up a large, smiling, muscular man, whose air of sparkling health seemed to burst through his dark-grey suit.

Mr. Mahommed had genially shaken a number of hands on his way in, and now offered his hand to Stanley.

"Mister . . . ?"



nearly reaching agreement on what was to be discussed, a motor-car knocked him down in Park Lane and he was taken concussed to St. George's hospital and treated for a fracture of the right leg.

At four o'clock the next morning the telephone rang at Eaton Square. After some time Stanley became aware of it and went down. One or two of Aunt Dolly's dogs, roused by the noise of Stanley's walking into a door on the way down, accompanied him.

He groaned into the telephone.

"Ullurgh?"

"That you Stanley? Julian."

It was Brimpton's secretary.

"Oh, is it? You know the time? I've just walked into a door because of you."

"Windrush," said Stanley, "I believe you met my father."

"Ah, yes," said Mr. Mahommed. "It is so pleasant. He was looking very healthy, I remember. You yourself do not, if I may say so. Now perhaps you would come this evening when I am holding a cocktail party at six."

And Mr. Mahommed, teeth glittering, passed into the conference room.

Outside, Stanley chatted to one of the secretaries of the Burmese delegation, a young man who, it turned out, had been to a much better known public school than Stanley's. By five o'clock the conference, a little nearer to agreeing on what they should talk about, adjourned, and Stanley went home to change. He set out in good heart for Mr. Mahommed's party.

At the Agyptian Embassy in Kensington excited persons of all colours were busy making an unusually confused din. Some, whose creeds forbade them alcohol, seemed to be getting equally bright-eyed on tomato-juice. A few of the guests were in full evening dress with decorations, though most were in what Stanley correctly took to be their normal clothes.

A genial and broad-smiling Mr. Mahommed greeted him. "Ah, Mr. Windrush. It is most enjoyable to see you. You are well once more?"

"Oh, I feel very well," said Stanley. "I hear you enjoyed your stay at Sunnyglades?"

"Ah yes. I am very interested in the Body, you know."

"Is that what the people they call Mahommed's Nature Boys are interested in?"

"Ah, you keep in touch, I see, Mr. Windrush. Yes indeed, they are a movement I started to keep my country fit, you know. You are perhaps in the Middle East Department, then?"

"Oh, no. I do Japanese shirts usually, but I saw a thing the other night about your movement. Actually I rang the Minister of State about it, but it wasn't important, apparently."

"Really? Do take another drink. Of course Mr. Brimpton is very over-worked now with this Conference, like us all."

"Oh, yes. He looked pretty tired this afternoon, but I heard him say he'd feel much better after he'd seen Mr. Emmanuel."

"The Solomonian delegate? Now that's very interesting. I hadn't heard of a meeting. I wonder what about."

"Oh, I've no idea. He just said something about getting it all tied up. Will you be in England long?"

"It depends, Mr. Windrush, it depends. Now perhaps you would like to talk to some of the Japanese delegation?"

"No, no, please," said Stanley. "Not off duty."

"You heard that?" said Mr. Mahommed furiously, when Stanley had moved off. "Seeing Emmanuel, eh? Getting it all tied up beforehand, are they?"

"Some swindle is doubtless being prepared," said his P.A. "Emmanuel wants them to turn the blind eye, of course. They call it the spirit of Nelson. Collusion, of course."

"Very true. But they are a nation of shopkeepers too. We must see how much they will sell us."

Stanley, blissfully unaware of having revealed anything, resumed his afternoon's chat with the Burmese. He was quite enjoying being a representative of his country.



A large perfumed Sikh, clasping a tomato-juice, leaned closer to hear their conversation. Two tiny Indonesians beside him prepared quite brazenly to eavesdrop.

"You are imperialist, sir?" asked the Sikh politely. "Ah, but much water has flowed under bridge."

"Oh you're absolutely right," agreed Stanley. "We aren't imperialists any more."

The Indonesians smirked at each other.

"Ah, there is no doubt you would wish to be," pointed out the Sikh. "Not your goodself, of course, but your government cannot get out of the habit. Isn't it so?"

"What Mr. Singh means," said the Burmese superciliously, "is that your Asian policy is distrusted."

You'd better tell him it's O.K., hadn't you?"

"Ah, we too have felt the rod of colonialism on the backs of our people," cried one of the Indonesians. The other gave him vigorous support with nodding. "Our motto is Unity Through Diversity, and all this is founded on clear philosophical principles. Never is it too late to negotiate!"

"You're absolutely right, of course," agreed Stanley in some puzzlement.

"Everywhere," said the Sikh, "you are leaving vacuums."

"Vacuums?"

"Naturally. And what is filling them?"

Stanley was losing the thread of this conversation. Carried away by the Oriental nature of his surroundings he called for a drink. Unfortunately, his cry, sandwiched in a narrow gap in the hubbub and clearly audible, took the form of the word "Bearer!"

The Etonian Burmese, approaching helpfully with a cocktail shaker, froze where he stood. Stanley, the focus of four dozen scowling pairs of eyes, blushed.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I got carried away with the discussion."

"No use to explain," said Mr. Singh coldly. "It is perfect clarity, your real opinion of coloured people. The imperialist slave-trader beneath the skin stands revealed to all."

"I think," said the imperialist slave-trader, making for the door, "I'd better catch my bus."

"Bit of a business at Mahommed's to-night, Julian," said the Minister of State. "I did get there late but he could hardly bring himself to talk to me."

"Is he sore about your chat with Emmanuel, I wonder, sir?"

"How can he be? He doesn't know about it."

"No, he hardly could."

"H'm. Incidentally, that fellow I had to-day instead of Wallace Hardy-Freeman. Who is he? He seems a dead

loss. Chatted to some Burmese all day."

"Windrush, sir."

"Yes, Windrush. Know anything about him?"

"Very little, sir."

"Mahommed seems to know him all right. I wonder if it's possible . . . Has he been checked at all yet?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Check up with the Personnel Department. Anyway, I certainly don't want him to-morrow."

In his flat Julian set his alarm for 3 a.m. When it rang he woke and dialled Stanley.

"Yes?" Stanley seemed desperate for sleep.

"Sorry to disturb you, my dear fellow. Brimpton's just this minute decided he won't want you to-morrow."

"Oh."

"Sorry to have to ring at this time."

Julian put the telephone down and went to sleep again.

Stanley's security check was expedited and the report from M.I.5 came quickly to the Personnel Department.

"Nursing another viper in our bosom, I see."

"Is he any good?"

"Well, frankly . . ."

"All right; we'll not fight it. How long's he been here?"

"A fortnight. In that time he's somehow managed to turn Mahommed against us and infuriated the Board of Trade with some rigmarole of a memorandum about shirts."

"Well, it wouldn't do for it to get out that we've taken on a clown. Better pin this business here on to him, about his sister being married to a Commie."

When Stanley opened the letter marked "Personal" he was surprised to read:

" . . . On these recommendations the Minister has been led to the conclusion that you must be regarded as an unacceptable security risk, and regrets that in the circumstances he must terminate your probationary period."

"My God," said Stanley, "I've been witch-hunted!"

"Well, there's only one thing to do," said Great-Aunt Mildred, "start painting the bathrooms. No need to waste one's time."

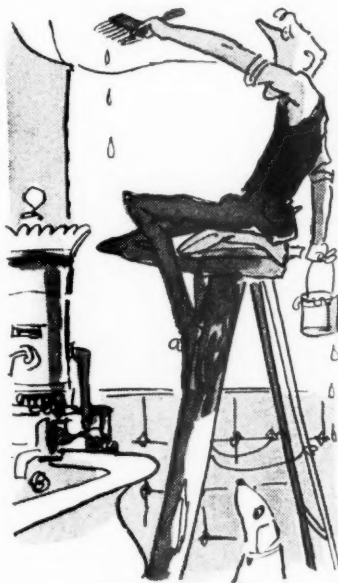
Stanley sipped his tea in a melancholy frame of mind.

"It's the *injustice* of it all," he said.

"It's worse than injustice," said Great-Aunt Dolly, "it's impertinence. I see no reason why you shouldn't be a Communist if you want to. It's a very dim thing to be in my view, but the point is, any gentleman is entitled to his opinions. It's bad for the working classes, of course, but it never does any harm in a gentleman."

"But don't you see, Aunt," protested Stanley, "I'm not a Communist and I've never wanted to be one. It's all nonsense."

"My dear boy," said Great-Aunt Dolly, "in *that* case I think I'll go and see the Foreign Secretary about it. It does seem a *great* impertinence."



"No, please," said Stanley hastily, "I'm afraid it wouldn't do any good at all. I suppose there must be something behind it."

"Well, what?" snorted Mildred.

"I've been trying to think. I don't even know any Communists."

"Well, no use crying over spilt milk," said Mildred energetically. "Care to come to the judo class at the gym?"

"Thanks awfully, but I think I'll go and buy some paint," said Stanley.

Stanley found painting soothing at first, but three days saw the job finished and Stanley's future as a gentleman still unresolved. One or two of the dogs had pale-blue spots in their coats as a result of straying in during the ceiling painting, but apart from Stanley's

recurrent nausea the painting had come off pretty well.

Wallace, after one premature re-appearance at the office, now wisely stayed away. With Stanley dismissed, the burden was likely to prove too great, he argued, for a sick man. This decision, taken in enlightened self-interest, forced the Personnel Department to transfer to the section a new man who at once proved extremely competent. It was quickly obvious that he was making a far better job of it than Stanley and Wallace combined, and it was this which paved the way for Wallace's reposting to Bangkok.

On the day following the business at the Agyppian Embassy the Coloured Conference returned somewhat uneasily to its tasks. Its early bounce and goodwill had begun to evaporate, a circumstance for which the British Minister of State was unable to account. He found himself longing for the goodwill tours to begin.

Stanley did not follow the declining fortunes of the Coloured Conference, as reported day by day in the newspapers. Having had a whole fortnight at Her Majesty's Foreign Office he felt he had done a good deal to help, and he had no particular wish to have much more to do with the business. There must surely be, he considered, other ways in which his expensive education could help the country. But although he felt, on the whole, distinctly helpful towards his fellow men, he found it difficult, reading the Public Appointments columns in *The Times*, to whip up any great interest in what seemed to be on offer.

"You know, Stanley," said Great-Aunt Dolly, "they've been talking about full employment for years in the newspapers, but look how it works out in practice. It seems an excellent thing for the working classes, but nowadays so many people like us have to have jobs it's all terribly overcrowded."

"You know," said Stanley, "I think I'd stand a better chance going where there's a crying need. Have you seen anything about this business of industry crying out?"

"I think industry's likely to be *very* tiresome," said Dolly. "And you'd have to go and live in the Midlands. I don't know if you've ever been. It's depressing."

"Oh, I don't know," said Stanley, "there must be lots of places round

London, making light stuff. I don't think I'd go in for anything heavy."

So when a day had been fixed Stanley took train to Oxford to see a man at the University Appointments Board.

"Oh yes, it's quite true," said the man at the Appointments Board. "Firms are always asking us for good chaps, and they usually like what they get and ask for more. We're gradually breaking down the resistance of industry to the graduate."

"They're likely to resist?"

"Oh yes, there has been that tendency. They used to be inclined to say 'We want chaps as soon as they leave school so that they know what they're talking about by the time they're thirty. Not fellows with their heads stuffed with a lot of useless stuff.'"

"Well, I think that's very sensible, don't you?" said Stanley. "Though mind you, I didn't stuff myself with a great deal."

"But now it's all changing," said the Appointments Man. "They like a chap with a first-class degree and they run special courses to train him for the job."

"I see," said Stanley, a little discouraged. "I suppose chaps like that would do well?"

"Certainly, in time. It's my ambition to have university men on the Board of Directors of all the big firms, and in twenty years' time we shall see it."

"I wish I were twenty years younger," said Stanley feelingly. "It should be

pretty easy to get a cushy billet when you get that organized."

The Appointments Board Man's expression altered.

"Attitude is vitally important," he said, a little primly. "One must be prepared to go to Industry and say 'This is what I have to offer—intelligence, a trained mind, the ability to learn, and so forth. And enthusiasm for the job.'"

"I see," said Stanley. "I'm sure you must be right; after all, you've handled hundreds of chaps like myself."

The Appointments Man began to say "Well, to be strictly accurate . . ." but he seemed to change his mind and went on: "Let me have a look at your paper qualifications."

He flipped through Stanley's file.

"Of course it's difficult to know what one's attitude is," said Stanley helpfully, "until one is faced with one ghastly industry in particular."

"Which ghastly industry in particular?" asked the Appointments Man.

"No, I mean *any* industry that one might consider ghastly," explained Stanley, "say a great heavy *thumping* business like iron and steel."

The Appointments Man swallowed carefully.

"Mr. Windrush," he said heavily, "you did say to me just now that you weren't frightfully good at interviews. I can understand that. But you must realize it's useless to approach any industry in a frivolous spirit."

"I'm so sorry," said Stanley, a little alarmed, "I'm afraid you must have misunderstood me. I really am quite serious about all this."

"I'm glad to hear that, Mr. Windrush," said the Appointments Man. "It's essential. Now, you say here you would actually prefer the production side rather than selling?"

"On the whole, yes," said Stanley. "I feel I'd be more *in* the product that way, and one wouldn't be badgered so much when sales were going down. I'm sure the sales people get kicked out first."

"Well, that's hard to say," said the Appointments Man. "You mustn't think it's a precarious life. Security of employment in industry's practically as good these days as in the Civil Service, and as you know, people in the Civil Service are hardly ever chucked out."

How very odd he should say that, thought Stanley. I only lasted a fortnight at the Foreign Office.

"You're rather restricting yourself, you know," said the Appointments Man, looking at Stanley's papers again, "when you say you don't want heavy industry and you prefer to be near London. However," he went on, "I'll sort out some vacancies to suit you."

Twenty minutes later, with high hopes in his breast and four duplicated vacancy notices in his pocket, Stanley left to catch the London train.

(To be continued)



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